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Nancy Equils. Hyatt
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PERCEIVED COMPETENCIES AND ATTITUDES OF A SELECT GROUP OF
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS RELATIVE TO PREPARATION
AND EXPERIENCE IN ADMINISTERING SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The College of William and Mary

Ed.D. 1987

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PREPARATION AND EXPERIENCE IN ADMINISTERING
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

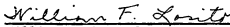
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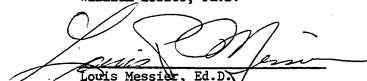
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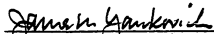
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DEDICATION

With heartfelt love and appreciation, this study is dedicated to my parents, Radford and Nellie Equils. Their never ending support, encouragement, love, and faith in me have enabled me to pursue my dream.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

The determination and persistent efforts of individuals and advocacy groups to achieving civil and educational rights for the disenfranchised handicapped children and youth of the United States were brought to fruition with the passage of Public Law 94-142 in 1975. During the 1950's and 60's, litigation to uphold the civil and educational rights of the handicapped began to pass through courts across the nation. This litigation eventually prompted a more critical and structured look at the necessity of providing a free, appropriate public education, in the least restrictive environment, for every handicapped child. As the social climate regarding civil rights activities related to minority groups in the United States became more favorable in the early 1970's, and as advocacy groups increased knowledge of methods for dealing with federal matters, legislative issues regarding educational rights of the handicapped created a climate for change. (Meyen, p.10) In 1975, Public Law 94-142, "The Education of All Handicapped Children Act," was enacted.

Often referred to as the "Bill of Rights for the Handicapped," Public Law 94-142 is actually an amendment to Public Law 93-380 which was passed in 1974. Public Law 93-380, which extended and amended the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965, was the first attempt to provide due process for placement, nondiscriminatory

testing, and confidentiality of school records. (Meyen, p.12)
Public Law 94-142 expanded the rights of the handicapped for
education in the public schools.

These important pieces of legislation were viewed by Meyen
and others as the "most powerful legislation of the century."
(Meyen, p.10) While legislation defines public policy, "it does
not," as Meyen noted, "guarantee that funds sufficient to imple-
ment the legislation will always be appropriated, nor does legis-
lation guarantee that compliance will be enforced." (p.10)
A plethora of problems was inevitable before the first steps were
taken by school systems across the United States to implement
the new law.

Significance of the Study

As Schwitzgebel and Schwitzgebel addressed issues concerning
the inevitability of management difficulties for new laws in
general, they stated:

The law does not solve legal problems- it
creates them. It systematically restructures
social or interpersonal conflicts into a par-
ticular, logical matrix...Such restructuring
may have a socially useful function in one
situation but a destructive result in another. (p.1)

Such is perceived as the case with the passage of Public Law
94-142. The "systematic restructuring" of the inequitable system
of providing educational opportunities for handicapped children
was, as Schwitzgebel and Schwitzgebel implied, set by federal

mandate in 1975, into a logical, well-planned matrix for assuring that no child be denied equal educational opportunity despite handicapping conditions.

The destructive results to which Schwitzgebel and Schwitzgebel alluded, were soon to be evidenced as public school systems took measures to devise programs and facilities for implementation of the new law. Public school administrators were apprehensive. The requirement that school systems identify handicapped students and develop programs appropriate to their specific needs, placed an imposing responsibility on all educational personnel. Most administrators were not prepared educationally nor experientially to fulfill the expectations and responsibilities placed upon them.

Losen (1985) believed that educators in many states moved rapidly in response to the law to offer the necessary services to children who were handicapped and that they attempted to comply with the regulations of the law in a spirit of concern and care. (p.3) Many systems interpreted the law as a means to move children who were culturally or ethnically different, into special education classes. (Gelb, 1983; Kabler and Carlton, 1982; Tucker, 1980) Other school systems chose to wait until litigation forced them into action to provide programs and services.

Intensive, sometimes tentative efforts to evaluate, diagnose, and determine eligibility of students for special education programs, resulted in the placement of thousands of students into programs that were blatantly inappropriate for their special needs. (Mercer, Dunn, and others) Placement decisions were often made by educational

personnel who had no prior experience or training in the area of special education nor knowledge of the characteristics and requirements of exceptional children for specific educational programs. (Gelb, 1983; Kabler and Carlton, 1982; Tucker, 1980)

Excellence in the public schools has become a topic of emphasis for the 1980's. One of the most important considerations in this move for excellence is that of the role of the school principal as an instructional leader. The development of positive attitudes toward all aspects of the educational process is a prerequisite to effectiveness as an instructional leader. If positive attitudes are to be developed with respect to the special education process, administrators must be knowledgeable of all aspects of working with exceptional children. The attitude of the building level administrator is one of the most vital keys to the success of special education programs; administrators must be confident and competent in their efforts to administer such programs.

Burke and Saettler (1976) viewed the process of implementation of the new law with mixed emotions when they stated that:

Implementation can be viewed as a landscape cluttered with impediments--the impediments of pessimism, ignorance, fear, incompetence, organizational inertia and disinterest...But the journey promises to be exciting and the trainers of administrators, teachers, clinicians, and therapists providing services for these children will be critical to its eventual success. (p.314)

Losen (1985) in a somewhat less optimistic vein stated as follows:

The passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (PL 94-142) wrought great changes in special education and generally set public schools on a new path with respect to handicapped youngsters. But for many school personnel the law was, if not an actual bureaucratic nightmare, at least a very bad dream. It tangled them and parents in red tape and nearly stifled them in cumbersome legal procedures. (p.2)

Although Public Law 94-142 has been in effect for more than ten years, many of the problems that have existed in the public schools since the earliest days of implementation, continue to exist. Requirements to provide appropriate placements, programs, and related services while maintaining compliance with timeline stipulations, are concerns with which educational personnel must contend on a continuous basis. Additional areas of concern are added yearly as federal and state guidelines are modified and as new litigation impacts upon programs and procedures already in motion.

Persistent efforts must be made to strengthen plans for compliance with the law if quality educational services are to be provided for the handicapped.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the responses of elementary school principals in the public schools of the state of Virginia relative to specific topics involved in administering special education programs.

Specific purposes of the study are as follows:

1. Determine the extent to which elementary school principals perceive themselves competent in performing various responsibilities required for administering special education programs in their schools.
2. Determine the attitudes of elementary school principals toward selected aspects of educational preparation, state endorsement specifications, and additional professional training as requisites for performance of special education responsibilities.

Statement of the Problem

Special education is no longer a concept that merely concerns public school administrators. It is a reality which must be faced with confidence and expertise in leadership. The formal assessment of principals usually emphasizes the skills related to "problem solving, judgment, organizational ability, leadership, sensitivity, stress tolerance, and oral and written communication." (Clinton, 1986) While these skills are prerequisites for general administration, the skills specifically related to the special education process are not usually addressed in such assessments. The expertise required for administration of special education programs is not collectively generalized from experiences in general administrative matters. It is suggested that a new emphasis be given to those areas of knowledge and skills that are directly related to the maintenance of special education programs at the

building level.

While several studies (Marro and Kohl, 1972; Forgnone and Collings, 1975; Finkenbinder, 1981) have emphasized the importance of establishing state certification endorsements for special education administrators who serve as directors and/or supervisors of public school systems, there is a paucity of research to support the necessity for such endorsement or additional educational requirements in the field of special education for school administrators who are responsible for administering special education programs in their schools.

Since the passage of Public Law 94-142, many procedures have been initiated to provide resources for professional preparation in the area of special education. School divisions have provided inservice education and written guidelines, state and national conferences have been held on an annual basis, and a proliferation of written literature, videotapes and films have been made available for training purposes. The extent to which administrators have availed themselves to use of such resources has not been examined.

This study will investigate the responses of two groups of elementary school administrators in fourteen school divisions throughout the state of Virginia, to determine to what extent differences exist between the perceptions and attitudes toward various special education competencies and concepts as they relate to administering special education programs in their schools. The two groups will be composed of those elementary school administrators

who were certified in administration before the passage of Public Law 94-142 in 1975, and those who were certified after that time.

Hypotheses

In the process of examining the educational backgrounds of a select group of elementary school administrators within fourteen Virginia school divisions, their perceived competencies related to the various functions and responsibilities of administering special education programs, and reported attitudes of agreement or disagreement with various topics such as the desirability for additional preparation and continuous training, the following major hypotheses will be investigated.

Hypothesis One - Elementary school administrators in the State of Virginia who received administrative certification after 1975 will have taken more graduate college courses and/or components of courses related to special education than those administrators who received administrative certification before 1975.

Hypothesis Two - Elementary school administrators in the State of Virginia with ten or less years of administrative experience will report a higher level of confidence relative to administering special education programs than those administrators with ten or more years of experience.

Hypothesis Three - Elementary school administrators in the State of Virginia with ten or less years of administrative experience will report use of more resources for professional development in the area of special education than those administrators with ten or more years of experience.

Hypothesis Four - Elementary school administrators in the State of Virginia with ten or less years of administrative experience will report less need for additional preparation and increased state certification requirements related to special education than will those administrators with ten or more years of experience.

Hypothesis Five - Elementary school administrators in the State of Virginia will report a need for continuous inservice training in the area of special education.

Limitations of the Study

Since it is at the elementary school level that the majority of eligibility decisions for special education occur and the largest number of programs exist, the participants in this study were limited to a select group of elementary school administrators from schools with grade level distributions of K-7, 4-7, or any combination thereof. The study does not include perceptions of administrators by other populations such as teachers, colleagues, administrative superiors, special education specialists, etc.

Central office personnel and secondary school administrators were not included in the study.

Selden (1984) emphasized that "choosing to study any topic is necessarily a value choice and a consequence of the interaction of human context and the researcher." (p.282) The implication was that any research is unequivocally bound to the element of human subjectivity. Such is the case in this research attempt. The choice of topic was based on social and professional interest and is predisposed to the subjectivity of respondents to the survey instrument used for purposes of this study. Since it is recognized that complete objectivity is not possible when attempting to generate perceptions and attitudes of self, certain limitations are expectedly placed upon the outcome of this study. Subjectivity is therefore a necessary variable in this research.

Definitions

The following definitions are essential to the interpretation of materials presented in this study but are not fully representative of the terminology of special education and the requirements of Public Law 94-142. Additional terms are defined within the body of the research study.

Public Law 94-142: The law passed in 1975 referred to as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. The law mandated that all states provide a free and appropriate education for handicapped

children and youth between the ages of three and 21 by September 1, 1980. (Meyen, pp.12 & 101) In an attempt to intensify state efforts to implement adequate programs for the handicapped, the law established a formula to provide federal funding to state education agencies. States are provided the option of applying for such funds. Any state agency which chooses to participate in the funding plan is required to submit an annual program for approval and eligibility for funds is stipulated upon 1) specific requirements for evaluation procedures; 2) specific requirements for placement (including the least restrictive environment concept) and the provisions of related services; 3) specific requirements for monitoring student programs, and 4) specific requirements regarding confidentiality of records, parent access to records, and due process rights. (Federal Register Part II, Sec. 121a.530) The amount of federal funds provided to participating states is based in part on a percentage of the average per pupil expenditure for regular education throughout the United States. When funds are allocated to states, local educational agencies must in turn meet specific requirements and submit applications to the state in order to receive a portion of the federal funds. The state must adhere to the requirement that funds be used to supplement rather than supplant the funds of the local agency. (Federal Register Part II, Sec. 121a.701) Since individual states provide their own regulations for compliance with the law, practices vary among the states. (Podemski, Price, Smith & Marsh, p.7)

Handicapped: The Regulations Governing Special Education
Programs for Handicapped Children and Youth in Virginia (1985)

defines handicapped children as follows:

The term 'handicapped children' means those children who are mentally retarded, hard of hearing, deaf, speech and language impaired, visually handicapped, seriously emotionally disturbed, orthopedically impaired, other health impaired, autistic, deaf/blind, severely and profoundly handicapped, multi-handicapped, or having a specific learning disability, who because of such impairment, need special educational related services. (p.8)

According to the regulations, preschool handicapped children below the age of five may be identified by any of the conditions listed.

Exceptional Children: "Children whose performance in school-related behavior varies from the norm to the extent that special instruction, assistance, and/or equipment are required. Children may be classified as exceptional because of intellectual, physical, behavioral, and/or sensory reasons. The term is also used to describe gifted children." (Meyen, p.485) For purposes of this study, the term "exceptional" will not include gifted children.

Special Education: Educational programs and related services provided for exceptional children who are impaired by one or more handicapping conditions and who are unable to profit from a regular education program because of the handicapping condition(s).

Multidisciplinary Team: A team composed of educators, parents, medical specialists, psychologists, social workers, and others as necessary, who act in various capacities to schedule and carry out

the assessment procedure and to make eligibility decisions based on analysis of all evaluation components for special education placements and/or related services. The components to be analyzed include a developmental history, medical, social, psychological, and educational data.

Comprehensive Assessment: The process used by the Multi-disciplinary Team for collecting and evaluating the data derived from psychological and educational evaluations, medical, social, and developmental histories for each child referred as suspected of having a handicapping condition.

Nondiscriminatory Assessment: Public Law 94-142 mandates that evaluations be conducted using instruments and procedures that do not discriminate either racially or culturally. Specifically, test materials must be written and administered in the child's native language, and no single procedure is to be used as the sole criterion for determining a handicapping condition. (Podemski et al, p.9)

Eligibility Decision: The process by which all components of a comprehensive assessment for a child suspected of having a handicapping condition are analyzed and a decision made as to the eligibility of such child for special education programs and support services. The decision is made by a multidisciplinary team responsible for the assessment.

Due Process Procedures: Those procedures that assure the rights of children and parents including "the right to examine

the records, obtain an independent evaluation, receive prior notice before a change in an IEP or program, and a right to disagree with and appeal a decision made by the school. This provides parents the option of requesting a due process hearing, conducted by an impartial hearing officer, in which both parties to the disagreement present their side of the conflict." (Podemski et al, p.9)

Related Services: The law requires that schools provide certain related services to students in special education programs. These services include:

...transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist handicapped children to benefit from special education... speech pathology and audiology, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, early identification and assessment of disabilities in children, counseling services, and medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes. The term also includes school health services, social work services in schools, and parent counseling and training. (Public Law 94-142, Sec. 121a.13)

Related services may also include other services such as adaptive physical education and music and art therapy if they are necessary for a student to benefit from a special education program.

Least Restrictive Environment: The provision of Public Law 94-142 that handicapped children shall be educated with non-handicapped children to the maximum extent appropriate.

Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of handicapped children from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes, using supplementary aids and services, cannot be achieved satisfactorily. (Stephens, p.74)

Mainstreaming: The practice of including special education students in regular education programs and classrooms to the greatest extent appropriate.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): A written statement which specifies instructional objectives and the type(s) and designated time allotments for specific special education instruction and related services. The plan must include the student's present level of functioning and a statement of annual goals. The IEP must be developed by parents, educators, and the student (when appropriate) and must be reviewed on an annual basis. The plan is designed to meet the unique needs of each student placed in a special education program.

Special Education: A Brief History

Expansion of the focus on the education of handicapped children and youth has progressed through a rather gradual continuum since the early 1900's, reaching its peak in the 1970's and maintaining a steady gain in momentum from that time to the passage of the public laws and acts mandating educational services. To facilitate a more in-depth understanding of the issues that were involved in this growth, it is important to gain a perspective from an historical standpoint.

Many writers have examined the period of unrest of the 60's with minority group issues and misplacements of children into special classes, (Mercer, Dunn & others) but few have reviewed the earliest records emphasizing social care, education, and related issues

regarding the handicapped. Wallin (1955) recaptured four specific historical epochs that could be distinguished in the growth of programs for the handicapped: the ancient period, the early Christian era, the Medieval ages, and the modern or scientific period. A brief review of Wallin's descriptions adds a deeper perception to present day understanding of the concerns of parents, educators, and the American people at large in dealing with the special needs of handicapped children and youth.

The ancient period was viewed by Wallin as an era of contempt toward those who were mentally deficient. Those individuals who overtly displayed any conspicuous deviations from the normal human patterns of behavior or physical characteristics that were strikingly peculiar were called idiots and were treated either with indifference or subjected to the cruelty and indignities of their peers. (Wallin, p.1) Even the basic right of citizenship was denied the physically and/or mentally defective individuals in Plato's ideal world as described in Republic. Such individuals were, from childhood, destined to a life of subjugation. There was no designated position in the social structure for their existence. (Cornford, 1972; Neff, 1966) Later in the ancient period, a more tolerant attitude emerged toward the "natural fool" who often resided in homes of the Roman aristocracies and were seen in the high courts and palaces as entertainers. Many mentally abnormal individuals, such as Nero and Caligula, rose to positions of power and influence. (Wallin, p.2)

During the early Christian era, charitable efforts were made by many religious leaders to assist the mentally and physically infirm. Efforts to protect, house, and care for physical needs were somewhat successful, but no attempts were made to train or to educate those individuals.

During the Medieval era, a period of superstition and reverence for those unexplainable events and objects in daily life, physically handicapped and mentally deficient individuals were often given special privileges and spoken of as the "heavenly infants" who enjoyed the special favor and protection of God. (Wallin, p.3)

Reverence for the handicapped was replaced with a vengence and hatred during the Renaissance and Reformation periods. The handicapped were viewed by Martin Luther and John Calvin as individuals "filled with Satan." (Wallin, p.3) Many records of exorcism attempts were recorded during this period.

The first institutional care for the mentally handicapped was initiated in Belgium during the thirteenth century, and during the seventeenth century, St. Vincent DePaul and his Sisters of Charity, established a refuge for the mentally and bodily defective in Paris. (Wallin, p.4)

Although Pereire, during the mid-eighteenth century began a small class for the deaf using lip and speech reading in Paris, and Valentine Haüy in 1784 attempted to train the blind, attempts to educate other handicapped persons were few. These early attempts

finally reached America and other European nations by the early 1800's with several major efforts attempted specifically for the blind and deaf. Wallin viewed these early efforts as representing the "greatest achievement in the entire field of corrective pedagogy." (p.5)

These earliest attempts to educate the handicapped prompted the establishment of the American School for the Deaf by the Reverend Thomas Galludet in Hartford, Connecticut in 1817, the first state school for the deaf in Kentucky in 1823, and the Perkins School for the blind in New England in 1831. (Nazzaro, p.7)

Efforts to educate other handicapped children were delayed until 1859 when the Massachusetts School for Idiotic and Feebleminded Youth was established as the first residential school for mentally retarded students.

The public schools in the United States made several attempts in the late 1800's to educate mentally different children, especially those who were behaviorally different as well. New York public schools established a school for "unruly, disciplinary, or truant boys" in 1874, (Wallin, p.18) and Providence, Rhode Island established the first school for "backward children" in 1896 as part of the public school system. (p.18)

Other large cities throughout the United States followed suit, and by the early 1900's, public school classes for five types of handicapped children were provided. The schools or classes isolated children who presented problems for instructional personnel generally

due to intellectual limitations or to emotional and/or behavioral deviance. (Wallin, p. 19)

Thus the early history of special education presents an era of uncertainty, prejudicial thinking, and educational confusion as to whether or not many handicapped children were capable of being educated. Political and social groups were the greatest influence on these early attempts at educational endeavors for the exceptional child. Laws for protection and education of exceptional children emerged sporadically throughout the mid-twentieth century and finally, in 1975, the passage of Public Law 94-142 was a climactic event for those advocates of educational equality for all children.

Litigation: Effects on Special Education Programs

The period of the 1970's witnessed the acceleration of demands of the handicapped for educational rights. Since the passage of Public Law 94-142 in 1975, court cases regarding educational programs and services for the handicapped continue to flow through the nation's courts at a dramatic pace. Each case impacts on the future of special education and the rights of the handicapped as well as on the responsibilities of all personnel who must work with educational programs.

Civil rights cases involving students from 1977 to 1981 were investigated by Marvell, Galf, and Rockwell (1981). Of 1,632 cases described, 47 percent were directly related to handicapped students. (Podemski, et al, p.157) The issues involved in these cases covered

a diverse area of rights including alternative programs for the handicapped, transportation, eligibility, classifications, payment for services, due process procedures, length of the school year, and placement in facilities outside the public schools. (p.157) Interestingly, 56 percent of the cases dealing with handicapped children were filed in federal courts.

It is relevant to note the variety of issues involved in the litigation and to examine several of the landmark cases regarding special education programs and the rights of the handicapped. The following cases as reviewed by Meyen (1982), Podemski et al (1984), Laski (1974), Nazzarro (1977), Zeller (1982), and others, are representative of such litigation.

Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens (PARC) v
Pennsylvania

This 1971 suit was one of the first involving the rights of the handicapped students to a free, appropriate education in a public school system. The Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens challenged the laws of Pennsylvania that denied education to children who were considered unable to profit from regular educational programs. The three judge panel ruled in favor of PARC with the conclusion that a majority of mentally retarded persons could benefit from education; that even those who would not benefit educationally should receive training in self-care. (Laski, 1974) The severely and profoundly retarded were thus to be provided with appropriate programs.

Millis v Board of Education, Washington, D.C.

This landmark case was the result of a suit filed on behalf of handicapped students who were denied educational programs in Washington, D. C. The handicapped children represented were classified as physically, emotionally, socially handicapped, and mentally retarded. (Meyen, 1982) The court's decision in favor of the plaintiff provided educational opportunities for handicapped students regardless of the classification and/or the financial impact on school systems. The decision was to assure that the needs of children be the first consideration, not the cost of providing the services to meet their needs.

Diana v State Board of Education

A district court of Northern California was the site of a suit in 1970 contesting the use of discriminatory tests for evaluating Mexican-American and Chinese children. The plaintiffs contended that such discriminatory tests resulted in the inappropriate placement of children in special education classes for the mentally retarded. The evaluations were administered in the English language to children who were not culturally nor language proficient in English. The suit was filed on behalf of nine Mexican-American children, ages 8 to 13. The nine had been placed in classes for the mentally retarded and each came from a home in which Spanish was the primary language. The court resolved the case by reaching an agreement of the parties to devise appropriate testing instruments that would not discriminate against Mexican-American children and to retest those children who had been previously placed in special education classes. Upon

retesting, seven of the nine children scored above the required score for regular class placement.

Larry P. v Riles

Similar in its challenge to the case of Diana v Board of Education, the case of Larry P. v Riles charged that discriminatory testing methods were being used to place black children into inappropriate programs. This 1979 case was followed by a similar suit filed in 1981 on behalf of all black children in the state of California who had been placed in classes for the mentally retarded. Although other assessments were completed, the placements had been made based on the results of standardized I.Q. tests. Children who received scores of less than 75 were placed in the educable mentally retarded classes; two-thirds of the children in such classes were black. A United States District Court in California prohibited the use of standardized I.Q. tests for identification or placement of black children in classes for the mentally retarded without court approval, and ordered each school district to reevaluate all black children previously placed using only evaluation instruments that were approved by the court. The court maintained that use of I.Q. tests for this purpose "constituted denial of equal protection." (Zeller, p.7)

Mattie T. v Holladay

A 1975 suit in the state of Mississippi was filed on behalf of all school-aged handicapped children. The case of Mattie T. v Holladay was one of the first involving the rights of handicapped

children based on federal legislation. (Podemski et al, p.163) This suit was a challenge to the state of Mississippi alleging that (1) limited efforts were made to identify handicapped children, (2) children were segregated in special classes, (3) discriminatory testing was used in identification of children, (4) there were no established procedural safeguards for parents, and (5) many handicapped children were denied services. A consent decree resulted in the initiation of extensive efforts to assure that the five areas of concern were modified and/or eliminated to assure the most appropriate educational program for all handicapped students with sufficient procedural safeguards for parents and children.

Armstrong v Kline

In 1979, the parents of three severely handicapped children filed suit in the state of Pennsylvania challenging the policy of the normal 180 day school program, contending that the policy violated Public Law 94-142. The parents wanted provisions for extended year programs. The court ruled that certain handicapped students required continuous programs and related services and that such programs were to be provided without cost. The decision was based on the stipulation of Public Law 94-142 that each handicapped child be provided programs appropriate to his particular needs. While the court did not specify the extended year program for all handicapped children, it declared that such programs should be provided for any children who required programs beyond the normal school year.

S-1 v Turlington

This 1981 Florida district court case alleged that the decision to expel from school a group of mentally retarded students for misconduct did not include action to determine whether or not the misconduct was related to the handicapping condition of those students. The court ruled that procedural due process rights must be provided for handicapped students. The Fifth District Court of Appeals upheld the decision based upon evidence that the school had not determined whether or not the behaviors were directly related to the disability. While the court ruled that expulsion was appropriate for handicapped students, in this instance, it resulted in a change of placement with the withdrawal of educational programs and services and was therefore in non-compliance with the mandates of the law. Handicapped students may be suspended or expelled only if the cause of disruptive behavior is attributable to other than the handicapping condition. (Podemski et al, pp.161-165)

Georgia Association of Retarded Citizens v McDaniel

This 1981 case followed previous decisions (Armstrong v Kline) and required the state of Georgia to provide and pay for education in excess of the normal 180 day school year for any handicapped child who needed extended education.

Rowley v Board of Education

In this 1980 case, the parents of a deaf child requested that a sign-language interpreter be provided for the child during

school hours. A federal appeals court ruled in favor of the parents and required the school system to place an interpreter in the child's classroom. The decision was based on the phrase "free appropriate education" as outlined in Public Law 94-142. In 1982, the United States Supreme Court reversed the Rowley decision. The reversal was based on court interpretation of the law. The reversal decision specified that (1) the state fulfills provisions of a free, appropriate education when services are sufficient to permit a child to benefit from instruction; the law does not require states to maximize the potential of a handicapped child; (2) Amy Rowley performed better academically than the average child in her class; (3) a special hearing aid, a tutor, and speech therapy were provided; the trial period with an interpreter made no substantial difference in her educational achievement; (4) the law does not allow courts the liberty of imposing their view of preferable education methods upon the state. (Supreme Court Reporter, 102)

Espina v Besteiro

The parents of a seven year old child who suffered nervous system damage and was unable to control his body temperature, filed suit in 1981 to ask that the school provide an air conditioned environment for the child. The school built a five-foot plexiglass cubicle with a window air-conditioner for the child. A federal district court ruled that the child was unable to mingle with non-handicapped students because of his confinement to the cubicle and ordered the Texas school district to provide air-conditioning for the classroom.

While the cases reviewed are representative of those heard throughout the states, they are but a small sampling. Each year the rights of the handicapped to appropriate educational programs are challenged from all perspectives. The innumerable distinctions within each of the thirteen designated handicapping conditions serve to compound the issues as new concerns for appropriateness of programs are brought before local, state, and federal courts in a steady flow of new allegations. The implications for future educational programs in the public school systems are awesome.

Overview of the Study

The remaining chapters of this study will be devoted to exploration of the various components of research to support the problem statement and purpose of the study. In Chapter two, a theoretical rationale will be presented with a review of current literature related to the problem of investigation. Chapter three will include a design of the study, a description of the administrative population included in the study, and a discussion of the measurement techniques used for analysis of the data. Chapter four will contain an analysis of the findings and a discussion of the results. A summation of the data analysis, conclusions, and implications for further research and educational practice will be addressed in the final chapter of the study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The passage of Public Law 94-142 has stimulated an environment for change in public school systems throughout the nation. The extent to which public school administrators have adapted to this change is an area of concern.

For many years, public school systems and public school personnel have maintained somewhat of a "status quo" position in American society. In the past, roles of personnel were adequately defined and instructional personnel as well as administrators were generally prepared educationally with the knowledge to fulfill their role responsibilities. Skills were strengthened with daily practice and experience.

Many dramatic events of the late twentieth century caused innumerable changes. Technological advances, litigation, pressure groups, and government involvement have redesigned many aspects of society and the general American culture. Public schools and public school personnel were not exempt from these changes. No longer can school systems operate on a day to day or even year to year plan; they must look to the future to anticipate needs for change to meet the demands that will be placed upon them as societal expectations continue to expand. Cunningham (1982) noted that "those who cannot visualize the future are destined to regret the past and fear the future." (p.246)

As Cunningham stressed, educators must be ever mindful of the past events and trends that will influence the future and be prepared to face alternative courses of action. Rather than deal in terms of maintenance of skills and knowledge, educators must become innovative learners, understanding the changes in conditions that have or will occur. (p.249) Botkin, Elmandjra, and Malitya (1979) compared the individual who does not respond to new learning as one who stands up only to "look for the lightning that has already struck." (Cunningham, p.249)

The role of the educational administrator has undergone an evolution. Administrators must now prepare themselves for change with new requisite skills and knowledge to assure more effective leadership in the area of special education. The "lightning" has already struck with the passage of Public Law 94-142. The effects are not likely to be undone. The groundwork for the future of special education has been laid and the future holds the promise of expansion of programs and services to handicapped children. Educators must be prepared to accept these changes and to adapt accordingly.

Theoretical Rationale

The causes for resistance to change have been explored by researchers and writers in every realm of the social sciences. There is no general consensus as to why individuals generally resist change, but many basic assumptions that imply psychological bases

for such resistance have been established. Several notable quotations (Wilson, 1978) allude to the complexities involved in change:

Change comes at different speeds, from slow to rapid; the speed of change does not determine the merit of change. (p.84)

People fear change because they fear for their own security; if change, or proposed change promises increased security, it will become acceptable. (p.84)

Obsolescence is the certain fate of those who cannot recognize the need for change or else who, in the recognition of the need, find themselves unable to act. (p.306)

Reboré (1983) in a discussion of change indicated that:

Change is more acceptable when those affected have helped to create it than when it has been externally imposed.

Change is more acceptable to people new on the job than to people who have been there for a while. (p.17)

Sarthory (1974) indicated somewhat the same tone when he suggested the following:

Change implies that the way we're doing things now aren't very effective.

We're all creatures of habit and like to maintain comfortable ways of doing things.

We feel just plain incompetent to do things differently and are often afraid to try. (p.142)

From such observations, one might conclude that the security of the past appears to hold the greatest attraction.

Herbert (1976) identified change as a series of related activities that occurred through people. "People must decide that the

change should be made, plan on how the change will be done, modify the organization of the firm to incorporate the change most effectively, hire or replace members with newly appropriate skills, and retrain those with obsolete abilities, and finally make the change work." (p.339)

Katz and Kahn (1966) emphasized that skills training was necessary when organizational change was undertaken. They criticized the usual method of attempting implementation of change through merely supplying additional information. This method was viewed as archaic and of limited value in producing desirable results. (p.392)

Wilson advocated that educational systems could be changed rather quickly, through forced change. Wilson stressed that forced change was the norm for today's educational systems. Forced change was viewed as that change resulting from controls and external pressures such as litigation, legislation, federal and state regulations, and government funding of specific educational programs requiring specific compliance measures. (p.32)

Although the concept is not a new one, Sarthory's (1974) theory of renewal deserves merit in view of the changing role of the educational administrator during the past ten years since the implementation of Public Law 94-142.

Sarthory expressed his belief that "...leadership has to do with keeping educational organizations adaptive to the changing needs of the clients they serve and the society at large." (p.30) The implication was for a continuous process of renewal. Such renewal was

based on identifying specific skills and competencies required of educational leaders and then setting into action a plan to develop those skills and competencies. The emphasis was on adaption to change and a systematic plan to assure that the process was continuous.

Sarthory's theory provided a leadership development model which unified the concepts of change and renewal as the basis for effective leadership. The theory implied that continuous training in specific areas of need was necessary for school leaders to become and/or remain effective. While the complete plan for self and organizational renewal as outlined by Sarthory would require a description more in depth than possible in this paper, the basic premises are quite easily delineated. The renewal plan calls for a linking together of school divisions, state education agencies, and institutions of higher learning into a consortium, each using specific plans and methods for meeting the needs of educational preparation and training for school administrators and other personnel.

The state education agency is viewed as the "prime mover" in the renewal plan. Three prevailing ideas form the basis for renewal. They are as follows:

1. School divisions and state education agencies should work together to identify areas of need for developing specific skills and competencies.
2. Institutions of higher learning should examine their programs to assess the need for change in programs to meet the demands of training for the desired skills and competencies.

3. State education agencies should critically examine the certification practices to determine whether or not "they guarantee that practitioners exhibit identifiable competencies and skills" or if the requirement for certification is merely completion of a required number of courses and experiences. Accreditation procedures should also be examined to determine the relationship to the effectiveness and relevance of programs. (p.44)

The major concepts in the theory emphasize the following:

1. Assessment of present and future educational needs,
2. assessment of the current status of the state certification agency as requiring specific skills and competencies related to needs,
3. assessment of current status of institutions of higher learning in preparation for meeting the identified needs, and
4. translation of needs into new and revised programs and structures.

The process would then require that 1) school divisions provide appropriate staff development activities, 2) colleges and universities restructure programs to include preparation for the identified skills and competencies, and 3) state education agencies provide guidelines and policies to support the efforts of school divisions and colleges by adjusting certification and accreditation standards to cover specific needs requirements.

Sarthory criticized the traditional approach of college preparation, state certification, and school division employment, calling it

a fragmented approach which neglected present and future needs in many instances. While the system outlined involved many processes that would require a major renovation of the traditional approach, the basic model might be modified and very appropriately applied to establishing a more effective method for developing skills and competencies required for school administrators in the area of special education.

Although universities and educational agencies have consistently worked together closely in establishing programs and certification requirements, perhaps a relationship that would include input from school division needs assessments, such as suggested by Sarthory, would be instrumental in providing a more effective framework for preparation criteria.

Other studies strongly support the ideas of renewal efforts for developing skills and competencies for administrators and for methods of assessing such skills and competencies.

Pottinger and Goldsmith (1979) stressed that alternatives must be established for certification and licensing agencies to assure that necessary competencies and skills were identified and measured. Certification and licensing of professionals was viewed as the means for assuring the public that professionals had the ability to perform competently in their roles. The views of Pottinger and Goldsmith were especially applicable to educational administration. They stated as follows:

In education and work settings, numerous changes in assessment procedures have occurred in the

past ten years as a result of demands for accountability from legislators, the courts, and the public. These changes are reflected in the shift from assessing what people know to what they can do. Licensing and certification practices have not kept pace with these changes because the courts, certifying and licensing agencies, and recipients of certificates or licenses have not demanded it. (p.26)

Pottinger and Goldsmith suggested alternative or additional processes that might be warranted in certification procedures such as apprenticeships and recertification programs, and a more rigorous approach to monitoring practices and performance. Such alternatives appear especially appropriate to assist school administrators in developing skills and competencies in the area of special education.

Hoyle, English, and Steffy (1985) addressed the issues of professional preparation of educational administrators. They concluded that university preparation programs were generally alike and included completion of such course requirements as organizational theory, theories and methods of organizational change, management information systems, organizational behavior, and human resource management. (p.1) Approximately two-thirds of the material specified for administrative training was felt necessary for all students; it was recommended that the remaining one-third of the coursework be devoted to specialized content areas. (p.3)

In 1985, the National Association of Elementary School Principals conducted the latest of several ten year surveys to identify the changing role of the elementary school administrator and the skills needed to accommodate such change. The major changes addressed in

the survey were litigation and federal government involvement in public school systems, including issues involving rights of the handicapped. The conclusions of the survey specified the necessity of change at all levels (university preparation, state certification, and local school division training) to establish a cohesive baseline for skills and competencies relative to the changing requirements and the necessary preparation and training programs. (Hoyle et al, p.3)

Special Education and Public School Administrators

The preparation of educators for various roles, be they teaching or administrative, calls for a new and concerted effort. Initial preparation and training are no longer sufficient to assure competencies in skills and knowledge. The demand for excellence in the public school systems has become a major focus in our nation during the 1980's. It appears reasonable to assume that efforts to achieve excellence will not diminish but will gain momentum as individuals and advocacy groups from all levels continue efforts to assure that all children are provided with the most appropriate opportunities to prepare them for the future.

Tyler (1983) examined many of the factors and characteristics that were significant to excellence in schools. The implications of his study are particularly appropriate to administering special education programs. Tyler emphasized that "individuals who, to be effective, should understand the purposes they are trying to achieve, should believe those purposes to be important, should understand

their own roles in the school, and should have the confidence to undertake these roles and skills to carry them out." (p.464)

Appropriate training is essential to developing both the confidence and skills necessary for administering special education programs. Although he provided no specific examples, Tyler reported that his experiences led him to believe that development of any program significantly different from those of the past, required from five to ten years investment of time and energies for the "actors to become competent in their new roles." (p.464)

While more than ten years have passed since the passage of Public Law 94-142, in actual practice the law has been influential in active change only since 1977. Perhaps the time and energies devoted to implementation have been sufficient to assure competence of actors in their new roles in many instances, but it appears from observation that the apprehensiveness over compliance with the law remains an area of concern in many situations and that many administrators have not yet accepted the challenge of the new role expectations. Tyler emphasized continuous efforts to improve administrative leadership, general knowledge, attitudes, and technical skills. (p.463) Training, experience, and retraining are called for to entrench those attributes that are requisite to the effective administration of special education programs.

Organizational life at all levels requires that members of the organization fulfill the expectations of each specific role assignment. If essential roles are not fulfilled, the effectiveness

of the organization may be endangered. (Bullock and Conrad, p.128)

Such is perceived as the case with elementary school administrators who are expected to fulfill the role of special education administrator when training and preparation have not dealt specifically with such responsibilities.

College education courses and internships in the school setting provide the framework for the accepted and approved method for administrative preparation. On the job experience provides opportunities for further development of skills and expertise. Special education has required development of a new category of skills and knowledge because of differences in programs, student characteristics, and teaching methods. The technicalities and legal aspects involved in compliance with mandates from federal, state, and local school division levels, add yet another dimension of concern.

While research indicates that most school divisions have presented inservice education opportunities and written guidelines as preparation efforts for special education administration, Katz and Kahn (1966) emphasized that occasional inservice training and the provision of written information were the least effective means for building competencies and skills.

Another theory relevant to the emphasis on adaptability to change through education and compatible with Sarthory's renewal theory, is that of lifelong education. Dave, Cropley, Suchodolski, and others, differentiated between the concepts of lifelong education and adult learning. Adult learning was defined as being

either recreational or as remediation for "earlier shortcomings" while lifelong education involved the expansion of knowledge and skills throughout one's life. (Cropley, p.20) Lifelong education is based on the assumption that "it holds promise of meeting the new educational challenges of the present and also those of the foreseeable future." (Dave, p.15)

Educators should be committed to lifelong education. The process of learning, of constantly enlarging the base of skills and knowledge required to transmit knowledge, skills, and cultural values to others, demands a lifelong pursuit for additional knowledge. As Cropley noted, "the theory of lifelong education places very heavy emphasis on education specifically aimed at fostering flexibility in social roles, the ability to adopt changed roles." (Dave, p.200)

Suchodolski emphasized the need for continuously updating professional qualifications and his opinion that "professional work must be subjected to constant controls of its efficiency. Whether this efficiency is measured in terms of individual success or of public revenue--in either case it is considered as the only valid criterion for the evaluation of professional work." (Dave,p.70)

Sociologist Henri Janne (in Dave, 1978) agreed that "jobs, whether skilled or unskilled are already requiring re-adaptation or will be totally changed in their knowledge and skill components. Training must become a fundamental factor of work organization and study a recurrent activity." (p.152) Dave emphasized that changes in all professions and vocations impacted on social, economic,

political, and cultural life and that because of the impact, a demand for renewal of knowledge, skills, and values throughout one's lifetime was crucial if individuals were to remain efficient and effective in both their professional and personal lives. (p.16)

Lifelong education was viewed as encompassing both utility, as in the process of vocational and supplementary training, and values that lie outside the realm of mere utility. (Suchodolski, in Dave, p.92) Perhaps this idea should rule the thinking of educational administrators, especially those whose knowledge of exceptional children and the special needs for education of these children is limited. The underlying ideas related to understanding of, compassion for, and genuine desire to provide the highest quality educational programs to meet specific needs of handicapped children, are values that must be strengthened. As values change, the motivation to become more efficient and effective in administering special education programs would be almost certain to follow. Pursuit of additional knowledge and skills would not merely be in response to requirements but wrought out of individual desire for personal enlightenment and professional growth.

Implications for School Administrators

Lietz and Towle (1982) realized the implications of the passage of Public Law 94-142 for public school administrators. They stated as follows:

The 1980's will see greater administrator involvement in exceptional education programs

at the building level, greater coordination of support services to EEN (exceptional educational needs) children, increased efforts at involving the parent and child in planning total educational programs, more precise record-keeping, and better methods of evaluating pupil progress. Accountability procedures will be implemented in special education programs, and principals will be increasingly involved in the evaluation of building level programs. (p.5)

The comments from Lietz and Towle support the idea that administrators must become more competent in their administrative skills relative to special education and more knowledgeable of the specific needs of all exceptional children. Educational opportunities and continuous inservice training must be provided if administrators are to effectively maintain the requirements of the law.

While teachers have been trained in college preparation for a wide range of special education teaching positions, implementation of special education programs is less likely to be successful without active and genuine support by school administrators. Cline (1981), Joiner and Sabatino (1981) and others, determined from various studies of public school programs in special education that the majority of school administrators do not possess the knowledge of special education programs and handicapped children that are necessary to administer such programs. Stile and Pettibone (1980) recommended that "all educational administrators become 'special' administrators through training in special education competencies." (p.33)

Podemski, et al reported that some administrators did seek professional improvement of their own accord, but that the majority waited until state certification standards actually required

additional coursework or training before any genuine effort was made for improvement. (p.14) Podemski, et al emphasized that while training was often available through school divisions, college courses were the most appropriate means for assuring acquisition of special education knowledge. Time constraints were believed to be the major factor hindering administrators in the acquisition of special education knowledge and skills. (p.16)

Johnson and Gold (1980) examined the role of the school administrator in administering special education programs and concluded that leadership was most often geared to regular education programs because of lack of appropriate skills and knowledge. They reported that "most principals have limited or no academic background in special education and, as a result, are often uninformed about the needs and possibilities of handicapped youngsters." (p.32)

A study of 321 principals in Maine by Davis in 1985, indicated that most principals had received little training in special education. While the majority of principals participating in the study indicated that they were responsible for administering special education programs, 70 percent reported that they had no exposure to special education topics in their college course work. Eighty percent indicated that training in special education was moderately to extremely important. (Davis, 1986)

Studies such as these support the recommendation for intensive training to bridge the gap between desired competencies and actual competencies for school administrators working with special education programs.

Required Competencies for School Administrators

In view of the fact that many school districts do not employ a director of special education, supervisory and other special education personnel are often in staff positions. The school administrator is responsible in a line position for authority and control. Because administrators are not usually prepared educationally with a thorough knowledge of special education, the situation often allows staff personnel to act in authority. The principal in such cases is often willing to give up his authority and allow others to make the decisions regarding special education matters. (Podemski, et al, p.2) According to Podemski, et al, the principal often subjugates his authority to his subordinates even in evaluation of instructional personnel because "they (principals) lack the experience and knowledge in special education." (p.2)

Dickson and Moore (1980) agreed that principals were at a disadvantage when they were required to serve as chairperson of multidisciplinary team and IEP meetings because of their limited backgrounds. According to Dickson and Moore, principals in such cases most often allow other members with more expertise to dominate such meetings. (p.12)

A study of school administrators by Nevin resulted in the identification of several areas of general competencies that general school administrators who are required to administer special education programs should exhibit. The competencies included (1) insure due process, (2) interpret federal and state laws, (3) apply appropriate

leadership styles, (4) ensure that records comply with the rules of confidentiality and due process, (5) resolve conflicts among program personnel, (6) use evaluation data to make program revisions, and (7) determine staff functions and qualifications.

A 1982 publication by the Bank Street College of Education in New York sponsored by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, outlined characteristics and competencies which closely correspond to those developed by Nevin. Finkenbinder (1981) specified similar competencies and stressed the development of programs for school administrators by state agencies which were designed to strengthen management skills related to special education. (p.494)

Lietz and Towle (1982) stressed that building principals must have certain competencies to implement Public Law 94-142. Drawing information from many studies, (Council for Exceptional Children, 1977; Lee and O'Neill, 1979; Lietz and Kaiser, 1979; Hargan and Farringer, 1977; Burrello and Sage, 1979) Lietz and Towle compiled a list of the basic competencies that were expected of general school administrators who were responsible for administering special education programs.

The competencies formulated from the studies mentioned were as follows:

1. An understanding of the basic handicapping conditions-visually handicapped, learning disabled, hearing impaired, emotionally disturbed, trainable and educable mentally retarded, physically handicapped, and speech and language impaired.
2. A cursory knowledge of the rules and regulations of Public Law 94-142, including
 - a. the function and development of individualized education programs (IEP's).

- b. time tables for referrals, testing, placement, and reevaluation of suspected EHC. (Educationally Handicapped Children)
 - c. least restrictive placement - why and how.
- 3. Knowledge of the available and necessary specialized educational programs and equipment.
- 4. Administrative skills to organize and to synthesize the administration of special education and regular education programs.
- 5. Flexible leadership skills to work with a diverse set of professionals, staff, and lay groups.
- 6. Competency in the preparation and control of EHC budget items.
- 7. Supervision skills in the area of screening, evaluation, placement, and program development.
- 8. Knowledge of and skills in the coordination and performance of related inservice for all staff.
- 9. Skills in the development of long-term policies and objectives and in the evaluation of school programs and staff - to redevelop policies and objectives.
- 10. Interpersonal relationship skills to work directly with children of varying handicaps. (Lietz and Towle, pp. 110-112)

Lietz and Towle asserted that the involvement of school administrators with special education programs was specified by state and local division regulations. The extensive involvement required of many administrators was viewed as counterproductive in some cases since a lack of knowledge of special education programs and prevailing

negative attitudes toward educating the handicapped often resulted in programs and services of low quality. Lietz and Towle emphasized that only those administrators who were sufficiently trained and who displayed positive attitudes toward special education concepts should be placed in positions requiring extensive involvement with such programs. (p.112)

In a forecast for the future, Zeller (1982) created a role for an individual in public schools who could act as a case management specialist for handicapped students to assure procedural control and continuity of programs. The individual acting in this capacity was viewed as somewhat analogous to the practitioner of "family medicine." (p.15) While Zeller left room for conjecture as to whom this role would be assigned, it appeared that the school administrator would be the most likely choice. Zeller emphasized the competencies that would be required in such a role as including (1) understanding assessment methodologies, (2) communicating with medical and educational specialists, and (3) working with parents of handicapped children with a sensitivity for their needs. It was noted that the prerequisite skills for these responsibilities were not provided for in any current training programs. (p.15) While Zeller predicted this case management approach as a future trend, in reality, the role expectations and competencies outlined describe very precisely those of the public school administrator of the 1980's.

In 1961, Conner (in Finkenbinder, 1981) stated that special education programs were but a part of the larger field of programs;

different from regular education, yet a part of. The implication was that such programs required administration no different than any other program. (p.486) Because of the major changes since the 1960's, Finkenbinder emphasized that special education had now become "an entity to itself," and required specific skills and knowledge for assuring adequate competencies for supervisory and administrative responsibilities. (p.486)

Lietz and Towle noted that "the passage of Public Law 94-142 has blurred some of the historical distinction between exceptional and regular education and increased the need for all staff to work together as a team." (p.122) The school administrator must no longer be considered the instructional leader of regular education only; the administrative expertise must cover a wide range of knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes toward maintaining excellence in educational programs for the exceptional children who have been identified as eligible for a multitude of programs and services. The future of education in general is implicitly bound to the provisions of special education programs.

Implications for Additional Training for Public School Administrators

A study by Pfeiffer (1981) investigated concerns of personnel in four urban school systems in the northeast relative to special education. While Pfeiffer found that administrators and multidisciplinary team members were concerned with procedural matters such as due process and legal proceedings, the issues of greatest concern

were with practical matters such as identification of specific handicapping conditions. Concerns also dealt with lack of program options and lack of time and opportunities for follow-up. (pp.330-333) A systematic assessment-intervention program for administrators and all team members was suggested as a practical approach to allaying the concerns of personnel by providing intensive training in such procedures as diagnosis and decision-making.

Losen (1985) asserted that administrators and other personnel who served on multidisciplinary teams needed specific competencies and skills as well as certain personal attributes to assist them in effectively carrying out their responsibilities and that graduate schools should emphasize both technical and personal skills for working with special education matters. (p.183) It was suggested that school system programs for inservice training should include such timely topics as changing statutes, special education options in programs, communication skills, conferencing skills, roles of specialists, identifying learning disabled children, evaluation of student progress, and mainstreaming, to name a few. The suggested topics covered the wide range necessary to improve skills and competencies required for all special education personnel who function as members of a multidisciplinary team for making special education decisions and for administration of special education programs.

An investigation of the role of the elementary principal in the referral, planning, and placement process for special education

by Dickson and Moore (1980) included extensive oral interviews with thirteen principals in two New England school districts. Examination of the interview results indicated several relevant findings as follows:

1. Principals reported that they felt confident with the referral process used in their schools.
2. Principals reported that they experienced confusion with the activities of the multidisciplinary team meetings.
3. Principals reported that they did not monitor IEP implementation nor did they assess whether or not progress was made in students' achievement of goals and objectives listed in the IEP.
4. Principals reported that they believed their main responsibility in the special education process was to assure that eligible students received appropriate programs.
5. Principals reported that they felt a source of satisfaction in dealing with problems of handicapped students and in observing student improvement.

Dickson and Moore concluded that "most principals have had minimal training and no teaching experience in the area." (p.12)

Mayer (1982) in an examination of the functions, roles, procedures, and evaluations of all administrators involved with special education programs, proposed several assumptions related to the principal's role. These assumptions suggested that although most principals have "a genuine desire to implement and maintain quality special education programs in their buildings, they feel inadequate

of their knowledge of handicapping conditions, special curricula, and provisions of the special education laws." (p.108) It was further suggested that principals felt overwhelmed with the time commitments required for completion of special education related responsibilities. (p.128)

A study by Ireland (1985) asserted that administrators must be knowledgeable of all aspects of special education programs and the handicapped children involved, and "develop an overt and positive attitude that others in the educational setting can identify." (p.15) The desirability of workshops and inservice education to increase knowledge of special education was emphasized as vital to the overall success of the administration of special education programs.

Lietz and Towle recommended that school administrators provide inservice training for the personnel in their schools to cover such topics as screening, referral, processes, placement policies, and parent involvement. (p.81) It was emphasized that unless school administrators had received special training and were confident in their skills and knowledge of special education topics that most would not feel comfortable in providing such training. It was suggested that principals who had received extensive training themselves would be more likely to inservice their staff members and that such presentations to others would increase confidence of administrators with their own roles.

Prillaman (1983) noted that although many studies dealt with

teachers and the mainstreaming concepts, few had addressed the attitudes and opinions of school administrators regarding mainstreaming. A review of related literature resulted in the conclusion that it was the attitude of the building principal toward mainstreaming and other aspects of special education that was vital to the success of special education programs. An inservice project was directed by Prillaman to train regular classroom teachers and principals in the concept of mainstreaming. At the end of the second year of the project, principals expressed a need for continuation of the training. In preparation for a new group of principals, a survey was administered to fifty school administrators who had not participated in the initial project. From the 42 respondents to the survey, Prillaman compiled data to be used for planning coursework and workshops for school administrators. Among the findings were the following:

1. Despite the fact that three-fourths of the respondents believed that normal children would benefit from some contact with handicapped students and that handicapped students would be motivated to achieve when placed in regular classes, the special class model was indicated by administrators as the best placement for handicapped students. This was contradictory to the conclusion that most principals indicated that if they were the parent of a handicapped child, their preference would be a regular class placement for most of the day.

2. There was a general agreement among administrators that mainstreaming would not increase behavior problems of students.

3. Principals generally agreed that mainstreaming would increase the chances for independence and productivity for handicapped students.

The findings from Prillaman's study were used in planning for future workshops for school administrators.

A study by Orr (1980) to determine the need for change in administration preparation for administering special education programs analyzed data obtained from 172 public school administrators, including superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, and assistant principals in six Mississippi school districts. A twenty-seven item questionnaire to determine perceptions of the implications of Public Law 94-142 for training school administrators, faculty members of schools of education and psychology, and for the benefit of the law to all public school students was analyzed. While a substantial percentage of the respondents felt sufficiently knowledgeable of Public Law 94-142, had received training in the areas of special education, and had experience in teaching and administration of special education programs, they agreed that special education courses should become a part of college preparation for all administrators.

Cross (1983) completed a study of public school administrators, including superintendents, in Tennessee to determine their opinions

concerning various procedural components of Public Law 94-142. The topics included the value of the multidisciplinary team approach to placement, the value of the individual educational program for special education students, and the value of administrative and parental involvement in the team process. An analysis of the data obtained from the 39 item questionnaire revealed that both pre-service and inservice education were needed to increase administrator acceptance of all aspects of special education programs. Cross concluded that the Tennessee Department of Education and institutions of higher learning that provided certification programs for administrators "should encourage changes which include and reinforce the implementation of Public Law 94-142. This should include both pre-service and in-service education through the Tennessee Department of Education for those administrative personnel charged with implementation of the law." (p.108)

A study by D'Antoni (1979) investigated the relationship between principals' knowledge of and attitude toward selected special education concepts in six South Carolina school districts. A true-false and multiple choice test was administered to eighty-seven principals to determine knowledge of five general areas concerning special education. The areas included were Public Law 94-142, least restrictive environment, placement committee, due process, and individual education programs. D'Antoni discovered that the more experienced principals scored higher on the cognitive test indicating that they were more knowledgeable of the concepts; however, those principals

with the greatest number of years experience as administrators had more negative attitudes toward the concepts on the attitudinal scale included as part of the questionnaire. D'Antoni suggested that (1) older principals may resent the increased administrative work required in implementing various aspects of the concepts, (2) that those principals may dislike the active role required of them in implementing the special education programs, and (3) that principals may not believe that special education programs are as important as regular education programs. Future investigations were recommended to determine possible reasons for such findings. (p.67) D'Antoni recommended that ongoing administrative personnel training programs be developed to enhance familiarity with innovations and changes in special education materials, procedures, and techniques. (p.69) It was also recommended that college courses be developed to prepare principals for a more in-depth knowledge of the mainstreaming concept and implementation procedures.

Coursen (1981) viewed the role of the principal as a critical element in assuring the success of mainstreaming and special education programs in general. The importance of the building principal to the process of building positive attitudes and encouraging participation in planning was stressed. The importance of establishing good communication, participating in staff development programs to develop skills, and finally, modeling the behaviors to encourage respect and acceptance of the handicapped school population, were felt to be vital issues for the successful administration of

special education programs. If the school administrator is to develop the expertise to carry out these functions, ongoing inservice provisions and educational opportunities are needed.

From a somewhat unusual and perhaps futuristic perspective of training and preparation for leadership roles for school administrators, Goodlad (1983) emphasized that very few individuals have been adequately prepared to provide the necessary leadership for schools. He advocated the provision by school districts for paid leave for individuals aspiring to leadership roles, with states funding assistance for such leave. Goodlad specifically stressed the importance of staff development efforts directed at all administrators for development of leadership skills. (pp. 75-76) In view of Goodlad's recommendations, an emphasis on administering special education programs as a part of intensive training efforts at the district level would appear most appropriate. Although state funding for training leave does not appear to be on the forefront of public school financial considerations in the State of Virginia, an emphasis on state and local division training in the area of special education for administrators should be considered.

Intensive training for administrators is desirable, not only to improve knowledge and competencies, but to enhance the administrator/teacher relationship in special education concerns as well as those of general leadership. Since the administrator is the leader/manager of the school, subordinates must have confidence in all aspects of the leader's ability. Bullock and Conrad (1981) discussed

the authority relationship between managers and their subordinates. One such effort to establish effective organizational authority was implicitly tied to the "authority of confidence" theory. According to Bullock and Conrad, (based on studies by Simon and associates in 1950) this implied that the subordinates' confidence in manager ability was affected to a large degree by the subordinates' perceptions of the competencies of the authority figure. (p.14)

Clinton (1986) reported on topics of school leadership and management that were determined vital for educational effectiveness. Principals at a leadership task force assembly reported that (1) expectations for administrators were not clear, (2) administrators spent more time managing than leading because of regulations, and (3) many principals were not adequately trained for their administrative roles. The recommendations for improvement of the areas of concern included several that appear particularly relevant to special education. They are as follows:

Revise state selection and certification requirements to reflect the skills and knowledge needed by effective principals.

Match the content of state approved educational administration programs to the training needed by effective school principals.

Develop a system to evaluate principals effectively and accurately, and

Provide inservice training to school administrators through, for example, state-sponsored training centers or higher education institutions. (p.209)

Clinton concluded that "encouraging schools and districts to experiment with new ideas should produce a wealth of successful strategies, models, and programs." (p.210)

Summary

The studies and related literature reviewed in this chapter reinforce the problem statement. School administrators are manager/leaders who must possess general skills, knowledge, specific competencies, and positive attitudes related to their leadership in the total school operation, including special education. The effective administrator does not exclude any program from his repertoire of knowledge and competencies. The administration of special education programs requires a concentrated emphasis on retraining and the acquisition of new knowledge. The success of special education programs depends to a large degree on the effectiveness of teaching and administrative personnel. The school administrator who is not perceived by his subordinates to be competent and knowledgeable of all facets of educational administration, cannot administer or ensure effective special education programs.

The role of the public school administrator has witnessed a revolution of change. Educators must adapt to the demands of the new role expectations with confidence.

Lietz and Towle provided an appropriate summation of the future for public school administrators who must meet the requirements for administering special education programs. They stated:

In the last two decades of the twentieth century, the principals' role in and responsibility for exceptional children will be carved from what heretofore has been only a rough-hewn model. For the administrator who is a leader, who has the vision to develop innovative practices, and who places the interest of the individual child and his/her family above all else, special education offers a unique opportunity in one's career. (preface)

Institutions of higher learning, state boards of education, and local school divisions must assist school principals in the transition of the administrative role to include the necessary specialization. Principals must adapt to the movement from general administrator to specialized administrator in order to assure the successful operation and management of appropriate programs and services for all exceptional children in the public schools.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The methods and procedures which were used to investigate the research hypotheses are addressed in this chapter. Six main areas are included as follows: (1) Design of the Study, (2) Description of the Population, (3) Description of the Survey Instrument, (4) Method of Data Collection, (5) Method of Data Analysis, and (6) Summary.

Design of the Study

The study was designed to determine the perceived competencies of a select group of elementary school administrators in the State of Virginia relative to administering special education programs and to determine attitudes toward use of resources for professional training, the need for additional college preparation, additional state certification requirements, and the desirability of future training in the area of special education.

A survey instrument was developed to elicit data necessary to investigate the five hypotheses as follows:

Hypothesis One: Elementary school administrators in the State of Virginia who received administrative certification after 1975 will have taken more graduate college courses and/or components of courses related to special education than those administrators who received administrative certification before 1975.

Hypothesis Two: Elementary school administrators in the State of Virginia with ten or less years of administrative experience will report a higher level of confidence relative to administering special education programs than those administrators with ten or more years of experience.

Hypothesis Three: Elementary school administrators in the State of Virginia with ten or less years of administrative experience will report use of more resources for professional development in the area of special education than those administrators with ten or more years of experience.

Hypothesis Four: Elementary school administrators in the State of Virginia with ten or less years of administrative experience will report less need for additional preparation and increased state certification requirements related to special education than will those administrators with ten or more years of experience.

Hypothesis Five: Elementary school administrators in the State of Virginia will report a need for continuous inservice training in the area of special education.

The investigation was designed to discover the relationship between the perceived competencies and attitudes of those administrators who had been certified for administrative positions before 1975 and those certified after 1975. The year chosen for the division of the two groups corresponds to the year of passage of Public Law 94-142.

Description of the Population

The population for this study consisted of elementary school administrators randomly chosen by school division from seven geographical areas throughout the State of Virginia. Fourteen school divisions were chosen in the sampling. The method used to obtain the random sampling is described as follows.

The Virginia Education Directory for the 1985-86 school year was used as a listing source for all school divisions within the State of Virginia. From the listings under the headings of counties and cities, each division was categorized under the label of small, medium, and large counties, and small, medium, and large cities. The size was determined by the number of elementary schools listed for each division. A median number was calculated for the total number of schools in each categorical classification and used as designation for the medium size division and for determining appropriate numerical ranges for the small and large categories.

All divisions listed under each category were assigned a number. A choice of two numbers from each category resulted in a random sampling from each of the small, medium, and large county listings and from the small, medium, and large city listings, for a total of twelve divisions. One additional number was chosen from the small city and small county categories. Since the small city/county divisions had so few schools and the possibility of fewer returns was anticipated, the two additional choices were made

to provide a more equitable treatment of participants in the small division category.

Five divisions were listed in the directory under both county and city categories. To avoid the possibility of choice duplication, those five were assigned to the city category. One such city/county combination was chosen in the random drawing for the sample. The final choices were examined to assure that all geographical regions in the state were represented. It was determined that each of the seven geographical areas designated in the Virginia Education Directory was represented. The sampling was therefore accepted as representative of the public school systems for the state of Virginia. One hundred seventy-three elementary schools designated as housing grades K-7, 4-7, or any combination thereof were chosen for participation in the study.

Description of the Survey Instrument

An investigation of related studies revealed that no survey instrument was available that would gather the data desired for this study. Therefore, an original survey was developed by the researcher to be used as a method for eliciting data pertinent to the problem statement for use in analyzing the five hypotheses. Specifically, the survey was designed to gather information, using several approaches, to determine the perceived competencies of elementary school administrators throughout the state of Virginia as related to administering special education programs and services in their schools. Although "confidence" and "competence" are

different entities, the use of the word "confidence" was selected for use in the survey instrument as an indicator of competence. It was believed that respondents would be hesitant to agree that they were not competent. Competence has been defined as being able or having requisite qualities. Klemp (in Pottinger and Goldsmith) further defined competence as a "generic knowledge, skill, trait, self-schema or motive of a person that is causally related to effective behavior referenced to external performance criteria." (p.42) Confidence, defined as freedom from uncertainty or command of one's powers, is viewed in this study as one's perception of individual competence. Although it is agreed that one may be confident and remain incompetent, the purpose of seeking confidence levels was to determine administrators' self-perceptions of their abilities to fulfill the responsibilities of administering special education programs.

The survey included items to elicit responses relative to background preparation and the sources of acquisition of specific knowledge and competencies in the area of special education. Also included were items requesting attitudinal responses to items pertinent to the desirability of additional training. A copy of the survey instrument is included in Appendix A.

Since the survey instrument was developed specifically for the purposes of this study, the design was developed through a gradual process. At each of several states of development, three

different elementary school administrators were asked to complete the survey. Any areas of concern with clarity of wording or expected responses were noted during each trial administration. Upon completion of the last revision, the survey instrument appeared to be adequately developed to be used as an appropriate data gathering device.

In an effort to assure the content validity of the survey, the revised version was presented to six judges for critique. Each judge chosen was considered to have, by way of position and experience, extensive expertise in the field of special education. The six judges were (1) the assistant director for special education for the Virginia Board of Education, (2) a division director of special education, (3) a division assistant director of special education, (4) a principal of a special education center and college professor of special education, (5) a curriculum specialist for special education, and (6) a school psychologist. Each of the six judges made recommendations for changes, additions, and deletions. Suggestions were followed and the final survey design reflected the recommended changes. Upon completion of the final survey draft, additional pilot testing was conducted with ten elementary school principals responding. No additional suggestions were made by this group. Input from the final pilot testing group indicated that they understood the questions and believed the survey instrument relatively easy to complete. The survey instrument was therefore considered to be appropriate for purposes of

this study. The administrators participating in the pilot testing of the survey were not included in the final survey results.

The survey consisted of three sections. Section I consisted of biographical/demographical data and items related to use of resources related to special education training. Section II consisted of items associated with perceived levels of confidence associated with responsibilities of administering special education programs. Section II was used to instruct respondents to indicate their attitudes toward various issues related to college courses and inservice training. A modified Likert scale with a value range of one to four to indicate responses of strongly disagree to strongly agree, was used for this section. Each section of the survey was preceeded by specific directions for completion of the items.

The survey was designed to be as non-threatening to participants as possible in both wording and content. Wording for the attitudinal scales reflecting perceived competencies was carefully chosen to prevent negativism on the part of the respondents. It was anticipated that the participants would view the survey as a positive approach to determining future needs for all administrators who were required to deal with an area of mutual professional concern.

Nunnally (1967) stated that self-report measures of attitude were susceptible to weaknesses in measurement since they were limited to "what the individual knows about his attitudes and is

willing to relate." (p.517) Nunnally implied that the extent to which anonymity was assured strongly influenced the self-report measures of attitudes and that the validity depended on the interpretation of results. Constructed scales were reported as more reliable than single item measures. The survey instrument was devised using constructed scales for measurement of perceived competencies and attitudes toward the various functions associated with administering special education programs and was accepted as a reliable method for gathering data. Pilot testing, although on a small scale, indicated reliability of the survey instrument for purposes of a data gathering device appropriate for the purposes of this study.

Method of Data Collection

One hundred and seventy-three surveys were mailed to elementary school administrators in the fourteen school divisions chosen in a random sampling from divisions throughout the State of Virginia. A cover letter explaining the purpose of the study was attached to the survey. A copy of the cover letter is included in Appendix B. A self-addressed stamped envelope was included for return of the completed survey. The surveys were mailed on May 14, 1986; participants were asked to respond by June 1, 1986. A total of 119 elementary school administrators, representing approximately 69 percent of the sampling population, returned the completed survey.

Of the 119 administrators who responded to the survey, eight percent were in the age range twenty-five to thirty-four;

Forty-three percent were ages thirty-five to forty-four; thirty-two percent were ages forty-five to fifty-five, and fifteen percent were over the age of fifty-five. Sixty-three administrators completed the requirements for certification in administration before 1975; fifty-six received administration certification after 1975. These two categories were used for comparisons in the statistical analysis of the stated hypotheses. Of the 119 respondents, only two percent had received doctoral degrees; twenty-four percent the certificate of advanced study or educational specialist degree. Seventy-three percent had received masters degrees; no administrator held a degree less than a masters.

Experience in administration revealed a wide range from one year to over twenty years. Fifteen percent had held administrative positions for a period of over twenty years, twenty-four percent from sixteen to twenty years, twenty percent from eleven to fifteen years, and nineteen percent from six to ten years. Twenty-seven percent had been in administrative positions from one to five years. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents were principals and thirty-two percent were assistant principals. Seventeen percent were employed in school divisions with student populations of 5,000 or less, thirty-one percent in divisions with 5,000 to 10,000 students; nineteen percent in divisions with 10,000 to 20,000 students, ten percent with 20,000 to 30,000 students, and twenty-one percent in divisions with student populations over 30,000. Table 3.1 indicates frequencies and percentages of responses for the biographical and demographical data of respondents.

TABLE 3.1

Biographical and Demographical Data of Respondents (N=119)

	Frequencies of Response	Percentages of Response
<u>POSITION:</u>		
Principal	80	67.2
Assistant Principal	38	31.9
Missing Answers	1	.8
Totals	119	100.0
<u>AGE GROUP:</u>		
Under 25	0	0
25-34	10	8.4
35-44	52	43.7
45-55	39	32.8
Over 55	18	15.1
Totals	119	100.0
<u>HIGHEST DEGREE EARNED:</u>		
Masters	87	73.1
Post Masters	32	26.9
Totals	119	100.0
<u>EXPERIENCE IN ADMINISTRATION:</u>		
10 or less years	56	47.1
More than 10 years	63	52.9
Totals	119	100.0
<u>STUDENT POPULATION OF DIVISION:</u>		
5,000 or less	21	17.6
5,000 - 10,000	37	31.1
10,000 - 20,000	23	19.3
20,000 - 30,000	12	10.1
Over 30,000	26	21.8
Totals	119	100.0

Method of Data Analysis

The data from each of the one hundred nineteen surveys were categorized into variables with frequency counts and value assignments given to choices for each variable. The compiled data were statistically analyzed through use of the IBM version of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). One hundred and sixteen variables were identified. Percentages and frequency indexes were used to describe the variables related to each category of demographic and biographic data. Percentages and frequency indexes were used to determine responses to each of the items related to special education programs, related services, and eligibility decisions. Each hypothesis was analyzed as follows.

It was necessary to establish two groups of administrators in order to analyze data necessary to test hypothesis one. Group one was composed of those administrators who were certified in administration between 1955 and 1975 (N=63); group two was composed of those administrators who were certified in administration between 1976 and 1984 (N=55). One respondent did not indicate year of certification. Data for the two groups were compared to determine the relationship of the groups relative to the number of graduate college courses taken, either as specific courses or as components of other courses, that were related to special education. Chi Square was the statistical procedure used to determine any significance of difference. Koenker stated that chi square was valuable in analyzing data that were expressed in frequencies or categories rather than

measurements. (p.104) Table 3.2 represents the data used to determine the composition of the two groups.

TABLE 3.2

Year of Completion of Requirements for Administrative Certification

Year Completed	Frequency of Response	Percentage of Response
1955 - 1975	63	52.3
1976 - 1984	55	46.9
No answer given	<u>1</u>	<u>.8</u>
Totals	119	100.0

Hypothesis two was tested using the following procedure. Part II of the survey consisted of statements concerning responsibilities and processes associated with administering special education programs. Twenty-four statements were presented; respondents were instructed to choose from three self-perceived levels of confidence in dealing with each specific topic. One category allowed participants to indicate that they were not required to deal with a particular topic or process. A confidence level was established by totaling the sum of the means for each variable in this section, dividing by the number of responses, and subtracting any missing values. The resulting

overall confidence level was analyzed with the one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) using the data representing the two groups established by years of experience in administration. Table 3.3 represents the data used for determination of the two groups. The correspondence of respondents grouped by number of years of experience and those grouped by designated years of certification is essentially equal with the exception of one missing answer, and the numbers may be used interchangeably. The data representing responses of the two groups were compared for significance of difference in confidence levels. The one way analysis of variance with the F ratio is useful when the standard deviation or variance of two groups is not equal. (Koenker, p.87)

TABLE 3.3
Reported Years of Experience in Administration

Years of Experience	Frequency of Response	Percentage of Response
1-5 years	33	27.7
6-10 years	23	19.3
11-15 years	29	29.4
16-20 years	18	15.1
Over 20 years	<u>16</u>	<u>13.4</u>
Totals	119	100.0

The data from Part I-b of the survey was used to test Hypothesis three. This section of the survey consisted of a listing of nine available resources which were appropriate for special education training. Respondents were asked to rank each with a value of one of the following: very beneficial (choice A, value 4), somewhat beneficial (choice B, value 3), not at all beneficial (choice C, value 2), or, I have not made use of this resource (choice D, value 1). A resource value was established by totaling the means for each of the nine variables, dividing by the number of responses, and subtracting any missing values. The overall resource value obtained was analyzed with the statistical one way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The two groups were compared for significance of difference in the use of available resources related to special education training.

Part III-A of the survey consisted of ten items related to educational preparation and training. The data from this section were analyzed to test Hypothesis four. Participants were asked to report their attitudes from choices on a modified Likert scale using four degrees of agreement/disagreement. The choices presented were strongly agree (value 4), agree (value 3), disagree (value 2), and strongly disagree (value 1). Frequencies and percentages were established for each item. Means and standard deviations were used to construct a preparation measure. This measure was statistically analyzed for the two groups previously identified using a one way analysis of variance. The resulting F ratio was

used to determine significance of difference in attitudes between the two groups with regards to preparation and training.

Section III-B of the survey was designed to allow respondents to indicate choices of topics that would be helpful for workshops and inservice training. Twenty-one items were listed. A cross tabular analysis was used for each of the two groups in relation to each of the twenty-one variables. The statistical chi square was used to determine the relationship between the groups for significance of difference in attitudes toward the need for future workshops and inservice training as stated in Hypothesis five. The .05 level of significance was used to determine significance of difference throughout the study.

Summary

The design of the study, description of the population, description of the survey instrument, method of data collection, and method of data analysis were discussed in this chapter.

An original survey instrument designed for the purposes of this study was sent by mail to one hundred seventy-three elementary school administrators representing fourteen school divisions in seven geographical areas throughout the state of Virginia. One hundred nineteen administrators responded to the survey. This number represented a return rate of approximately sixty-nine percent.

The purpose of the survey was to gather data relative to perceived competencies of administrators relative to fulfilling the

responsibilities required for administering special education programs in their schools and to determine attitudes related to benefit and use of available resources for training and the need and desirability of training and certification requirements for administrators. The respondents to the survey were divided into two groups; one group represented elementary school administrators who had completed the requirements for administrative certification and were employed as public school administrators for less than ten years. The second group represented administrators who had completed requirements for administrative certification and were employed as public school administrators for ten or more years. The categorized classification corresponded to the year of passage of Public Law 94-142.

Various biographical and demographical information was compiled using frequency and category indexes as variables for comparison between the two groups. A discussion of the statistical methods used for data analysis included the one way analysis of variance with an F ratio and Chi Square with cross tabulation of variables to determine any significant difference between the two groups of administrators.

CHAPTER IV

Analysis of Results

The results of analysis of the research data will be presented in this chapter. Complete tables of supporting data for the responses to the survey used for this study will supplement those tables presented in Chapter III. Data to support analysis of the five hypotheses will be presented. A summary of the findings will conclude the chapter.

Findings

Section I-a of the survey instrument was used to obtain data indicating the extent to which elementary school administrators were involved with various special education programs in their schools. The data obtained indicated that forty-two percent of elementary administrators responding to the survey had self-contained learning disabilities classes in their schools; eighty percent had learning disabilities resource classes. Frequencies and percentages for all other categorical classifications are shown in Table 4.1. All respondents to the survey indicated that they had at least one program, and the mean obtained for the total number of special education programs was 2.5 per school.

Services related to special education programs were provided in the schools as follows: Ninety-four percent of respondents indicated that speech therapy was provided; forty-three percent indicated the provision of both physical therapy and occupational

therapy as related services. Data representing frequencies and percentages for all related services are reported in Table 4.2.

Table 4.1

Special Education Programs in Elementary Schools
As Reported by All Administrators Participating in the Study

Category	Frequency of Response	Percentage of Response
Learning Disabled (resource)	96	80.7
Learning Disabled (self-contained)	50	42.0
Educable Mentally Retarded	30	25.2
Preschool Handicapped	24	20.2
Emotionally Disturbed (itinerant model)	22	18.5
Hearing Impaired	21	17.6
Visually Impaired	21	17.6
Emotionally Disturbed (self-contained)	15	12.6
Trainable Mentally Retarded	13	10.9
Cross-Categorical (resource)	7	5.9
Cross-Categorical (self-contained)	4	3.4
Multihandicapped	4	3.4
Total Programs	307	
Mean (x) per school = 2.5 programs		

Table 4.2
 Related Services Provided
 As Reported by All Administrators Participating in the Study

Category	Frequency of Response	Percentage of Response
Speech Therapy	112	94.1
Occupational Therapy	52	43.7
Physical Therapy	51	42.9
Counseling	<u>4</u>	3.4
Total Related Services	219	
Mean (x) per school = 1.8 related services		

Administrators reported that eligibility decisions for special education placements were made by (1) a multidisciplinary team within the school (twenty percent), (2) a central office team (.8 percent), and (3) a combination of the two (seventy-two percent).

Of the one hundred nineteen respondents to the survey, eight percent indicated that they had previously held positions directly related to special education prior to becoming an elementary school administrator.

Thirty-one percent of the respondents indicated that they had completed special education related courses, either as separate courses, or as components of other courses, in their undergraduate programs. Thirty-seven percent indicated completion of related courses in their graduate programs. Of this number, thirty respondents (twenty-five percent) indicated that they had completed course work in Child Development, either as a specific course or as a component of another course. Frequencies and percentages for special education related topics and courses reported by all respondents as completed in graduate programs are shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3
Graduate Courses Related to Special Education
As Reported by All Respondents

Topic	Frequencies and Percentages					
	Specific Course		Component of Course		Not Taken	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Abnormal Behavior	7	5.9	7	5.9	105	88
Behavior Management	5	4.2	6	5.0	107	89
Characteristics of M.R.	7	5.9	4	3.4	107	89
Child Development	21	17.6	9	7.6	89	74.5
Children with L.D.	12	10.1	6	5.0	101	84.9
Communication Disorders	5	4.2	5	4.2	109	91.6
Diagnostic Testing	13	10.9	7	5.9	99	83.2
E. D. Children	9	7.6	6	5.0	104	87.4
Evaluation Techniques	10	8.4	10	8.4	99	83.2
Exceptional Children	11	9.2	7	5.9	101	84.9
Programs and Services	5	4.2	9	7.6	105	88.2
Trends and Issues	8	6.7	9	7.6	99	83.2

NOTE: In three instances, respondents marked both items - specific course and component of another course. Those topics, frequencies and percents are as follows:

Behavior Management	Frequency - 1	Percent - .8
Characteristics of M.R.	Frequency - 1	Percent - .8
Trends and Issues	Frequency - 2	Percent - 1.7

These choices are reflected in the chi square analysis

Testing of HypothesesHypothesis One

Hypothesis one was stated: Elementary school administrators in the State of Virginia who received administrative certification after 1975 will have taken more graduate college courses and/or components of courses related to special education than those administrators who received administrative certification before 1975.

Chi square was the statistical procedures used to determine the relationship between the two groups regarding the number of college graduate courses taken relative to special education topics. Group I consisted of those administrators who were certified after 1975; Group II administrators were certified before 1975. The cross-tabulation of responses included frequencies for both specific courses and those topics that were included as a component of another course.

There was no significant difference between the two groups. Hypothesis one was therefore rejected at the .05 level of confidence. The results imply that administrators who were certified after the passage of Public Law 94-142 were not required to complete course work related to special education to any greater extent than those administrators who were certified prior to passage of the law. Table 4.4 is used to report the chi square analysis of graduate work related to special education topics as reported.

Table 4.4

Chi Square Analysis of Graduate Courses Taken in Special Education

Topic	Frequency of Response		Chi Square	Sig.
	Group I	Group II		
Abnormal Behavior	9	5	1.18758	.2758
Behavior Management	5	7	.00805	.9285
Characteristics of M.R.	7	5	.27064	.6029
Child Development	16	14	.34185	.5588
Children with L.D.	10	8	.27842	.5977
Communication Disorders	5	5	.00000	1.0000
Diagnostic Testing	10	10	.00188	.9654
E. D. Children	8	7	.05960	.8071
Evaluation Techniques	11	9	.28569	.5930
Exceptional Children	8	10	.00000	1.0000
Programs and Services	7	7	.00000	1.0000
Trends and Issues	11	8	.61088	.4345

d.f. = 1

Not significant at the .05 level

Group I - N=56 (Certified after 1975)

Group II - N=63 (Certified before 1975)

Hypothesis Two

Hypothesis two was stated: Elementary school administrators in the State of Virginia with ten or less years of administrative experience will report a higher level of confidence relative to administering special education programs than those administrators with ten or more years of experience.

An analysis of means and standard deviations was used to establish an overall confidence level. This confidence level was analyzed statistically with the one way analysis of variance to determine any significance of difference between the confidence levels of the two groups of elementary school administrators. There was no significant difference between the groups regarding their perceived confidence levels. The data implies that administrators with ten or less years experience and those administrators with ten or more years of administrative experience were equally confident with fulfilling their responsibilities involved in administering special education programs. Table 4.5 is used to report the means and standard deviations for the twenty-four items presented in Part II of the survey related to confidence levels.

As indicated in Table 4.5, respondents were most confident in fulfilling their responsibilities which dealt with compliance with division guidelines and time tables, understanding roles of support personnel, maintenance of records and reports, understanding the purpose of the IEP, and other procedural items. The areas of least confidence were reported as those dealing with the

development of IEP's, understanding Public Law 94-142, explaining assessment results, making suggestions for alternative educational strategies when students were not eligible for special education placements, assessing student programs, and understanding the specifics of the educational needs of students as being congruent with the teaching styles of teachers.

Table 4.6 is used to report data from the one way analysis of variance. Confidence levels as reported by all respondents may be found in Appendix C.

Table 4.5

Means and Standard Deviations for Confidence Levels
As Reported by All Respondents

Item/General Topic	Mean	S.D.
Purpose of Public Law 94-142	2.991	.645
Characteristics for comprehensive assessment	3.169	.617
Referral for comprehensive assessment	3.210	.662
Multidisciplinary team responsibilities	3.353	.708
Maintain timelines	3.241	.753
Decision making	3.269	.733
Explain assessment results	2.949	.652
Develop I.E.P.	2.843	.744
I.E.P. conference	3.095	.757
Placement procedures	3.235	.733
Least restrictive environment	3.305	.734
Due process rights	3.195	.798
I.E.P. purpose	3.347	.709
Multidisciplinary team rationale	3.246	.739
Suggestions/alternative solutions	2.924	.715
Compliance with division guidelines	3.303	.671
Support service: roles and responsibilities	3.286	.703
Congruence of teaching style and needs	2.966	.676
Assess student progress	2.777	.694
Mainstreaming	3.139	.687
Modification of I.E.P.	3.008	.722
Maintenance of records and reports	3.325	.680
Triennial evaluations	3.236	.729
Placement of students;transfer	3.211	.722

Maximum value = 4.000

Minimum value = 2.000

NOTE: Complete topic headings may be found in the survey instrument,
Part II - Appendix A

Table 4.6
Analysis of Variance
Reported Confidence Levels of All Respondents

Source	D.F.	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares
Between Groups:	1	.4677	.4677
10 or less years exp.			
10 or more years exp.			
Within Groups	<u>117</u>	<u>25.3436</u>	<u>.2166</u>
Totals	118	25.8114	
Missing = 1			
F Ratio =	.6493		
F Probability =	.4220	Not significant at the .05 level	

Hypothesis Three

Hypothesis three was stated: Elementary school administrators in the State of Virginia with ten or less years of administrative experience will report use of more resources for professional development in the area of special education than those administrators with ten or more years of experience.

Part I-B, Section 5 of the survey requested information regarding the level of benefit derived and use of various available resources in acquiring knowledge and skills for administering special education programs. The nine listed resources were presented with a scale and a choice of value assignments as follows: (1) very beneficial (choice A, value 4), (2) somewhat beneficial (choice B, value 3), (3) not at all beneficial (choice C, value 2), and (4) choice D, value 1, indicating that the respondent had not made use of the particular resource listed.

The mean for each of the nine variables was obtained and a resource measure based on those means was established. The data were statistically analyzed by use of the one way analysis of variance. The results indicated an F ratio of .6493 and an F probability of .4220 which was not significant at the .05 level. Hypothesis three was therefore rejected. The analysis indicated that there was no significant difference between the two groups in the reported use of various resources nor in the attitudes toward benefit derived from use of the resources.

Data from the combined group responses indicated the following:

Seventy-nine percent of all respondents indicated that they had used school division inservices as a resource. Of this percentage 42.9 percent indicated that inservices were somewhat beneficial; 36.1 percent indicated that they were very beneficial; 7.6 percent reported that inservices were not at all beneficial, and 7.6 percent indicated that they had not used inservices as a resource for acquiring skills and knowledge related to special education.

Seventy-six percent of all respondents indicated that they had used written guidelines provided by their school divisions as a resource. Of this number, 44.5 percent indicated that the guidelines were somewhat beneficial; 31.1 percent indicated that they were very beneficial; 10.9 percent reported that school division guidelines were not at all beneficial, and 5.9 percent had not used school division guidelines as a resource.

Sixty-three percent of all respondents indicated that they had used written guidelines and regulations provided by the state as a resource. Of this number, 41.2 percent indicated that the regulations were somewhat beneficial; 21.8 percent indicated that they were very beneficial; 13 percent reported that the use of guidelines and regulations was not at all beneficial and 14.3 percent had not used written guidelines and regulations provided by the state as a resource.

Fifty-five percent of all respondents reported that they had taken college courses, either graduate or undergraduate.

Of this number, 32 percent indicated that college courses were somewhat beneficial as a resource for acquiring skills and knowledge related to special education; 11.8 percent indicated that courses were very beneficial; 10 percent indicated that college courses were not at all beneficial, and 38 percent had not used college courses as a resource.

The results of the analysis of variance for use of resources are reported in Table 4.7. Frequencies and percentages for the mean values for all resources are reported in Appendix D. Appendix E is used to report individual analyses for each resource category.

Hypothesis Four

Hypothesis four was stated: Elementary school administrators in the State of Virginia with ten or less years of administrative experience will report less need for additional educational preparation and increased state certification requirements related to special education than will those administrators with ten or more years of experience.

Ten items related to educational preparation and training were presented in Part III of the survey with a modified Likert scale for responses. The four levels of agreement/disagreement from which respondents were asked to choose were (1) strongly agree (value four), agree (value three), disagree (value two), and strongly disagree (value one).

Means and standard deviations for each of the ten items were determined and a preparation measure was established by totaling the means for each of the ten variables, dividing by the number of responses, and subtracting any missing values. The preparation measure was statistically analyzed with the one way analysis of variance. The results indicated an F ratio of 2.6734 and an F probability of .1047. The results were not significant at the .05 level and hypothesis four was therefore rejected.

The findings are revealing in that they imply that both groups of elementary school administrators perceive a need for expansion of preparation efforts by colleges, the state education agency, and local school divisions. The mean of 3.288 for both groups supports this conclusion.

Among the most revealing of the findings were the following:

Forty-seven percent of the total respondents from both groups strongly agreed and 42.9 percent agreed that college courses in graduate programs for administrative certification related to special education would have been helpful. Only 6.7 percent disagreed and one respondent disagreed.

Sixty-one percent strongly agreed that graduate programs for administrative certification should include a course dealing with characteristics of exceptional children; 36.1 percent agreed and 2.5 percent disagreed.

Fifty-three percent of respondents strongly agreed that graduate programs for administrative certification should include a course

Table 4.7
 Analysis of Variance
 Use of Resources Relevant to Special Education

Source	D.F.	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares
Between Groups:	1	.2704	.2704
10 or less years exp.			
10 or more years exp.			
Within Groups	<u>116</u>	<u>48.2998</u>	.4164
Totals	117	48.5702	
Missing = 2			
F Ratio =	.6493		
F Probability =	.4220	Not significant at the .05 level	

dealing with diagnostic evaluation and test interpretation; 41.2 percent agreed and 5 percent disagreed.

Forty-two percent of all respondents strongly agreed that state certification requirements for administrative certification should include a course dealing with characteristics of exceptional children; 43.7 percent agreed and 12.6 percent disagreed.

Thirty-seven percent of all respondents strongly agreed that state certification requirements for administrative certification should include a course dealing with diagnostic evaluation and test interpretation; 46.2 percent agreed, 13.4 percent disagreed, and 1.7 percent strongly disagreed.

A complete index of the frequencies and percentages for each of the ten variables may be found in Appendix F. Table 4.8 is used to present the results of the one way analysis of variance. An analysis of each variable is provided in Appendix G.

Hypothesis Five

Hypothesis five was stated: Elementary school administrators in the State of Virginia will perceive a need for continuous inservice training in the area of special education.

Respondents to the survey were asked to choose from a listing of twenty-one special education related topics presented in Part III-B of the survey those topics that would be most helpful to the role of the school administrator working with special education.

The analysis of this data was completed through the use of

Table 4.8
Analysis of Variance
Perceived Need for Preparation and Training

Source	D.F.	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares
Between Groups	1	.4336	.4336
10 or less years exp.			
10 or more years exp.			
Within Groups	<u>117</u>	<u>18.9751</u>	.1622
Totals	118	19.4087	
Missing = 1			
F Ratio =	2.6734		
F Probability =	.1047	Not significant at the .05 level	

frequencies and percentages for all respondents (N=119) for each of the twenty-one topics. This procedure indicated that a significant number of elementary school administrators in the state perceive a need for continuous inservice training. Hypothesis five is therefore accepted. A frequency index with percentages may be found in Appendix H.

The topics that were chosen most often as an area of interest were as follows: (1) Characteristics of Learning Disabilities, 78.2 percent, (2) Characteristics of Emotional Disturbances, 69.7 percent, (3) Identification of Handicapped Children, 51.3 percent, (4) Diagnostic Methods of Evaluation, 53.8 percent, (5) The Changing Law: Recent Litigation and Possible Impact on Special Education Programs/Administration, 58.8 percent, and (6) Understanding Test Results, 48.7 percent.

The topics that were least often chosen as an area of interest were as follows: (1) Characteristics of Children with Hearing Impairment, 22.7 percent, (2) Nondiscriminatory Evaluation, 26.9 percent, (3) Writing the IEP, 30.3 percent, (3) Characteristics of Children with Speech Impairments, 31.1 percent, (4) Special Education Teacher and the Handicapped, 31.1 percent, (5) Public Law 94-142: Rationale, 36.1 percent, (6) Evaluation of programs, 37 percent, and (7) Mainstreaming Handicapped Students, 38.7 percent. A discussion of these findings will be presented in Chapter Five.

A field grounded hypothesis was developed to determine the

differences in choices of topics between the two groups of elementary school administrators previously identified in hypotheses two, three, and four. This hypothesis was stated as follows: There will be a difference in the perceived need for ongoing inservice training in the area of special education for those administrators with ten or less years of administrative experience and those with ten or more years of experience.

A cross-tabular analysis was calculated for each variable and the statistical chi square was applied to determine any significance of difference. The chi square analysis presented in Table 4.9 indicates that there was no significant difference between the two groups as to the perceived desirability of additional inservice training in special education. The field grounded hypothesis is therefore rejected. Analysis of the data indicated one topic choice with a statistically significant difference although this finding was relatively insignificant in relationship to the stated hypothesis. A chi square of .0026 was obtained for the topic Understanding Test Results. Thirty-six of the Group I respondents (those with ten or less years experience, N=56) and twenty-two of the Group II respondents (those with more than ten years experience, N=63) indicated this topic as a choice for inservice training. The implication of this finding will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Table 4.9

Chi Square Analysis: Workshops/Inservice Topics

Topic	Frequency of Group I	Response Group II	Percentage of Response Both Groups	Chi Square	Significance
Learning Disabilities	45	48	78.2	.10680	.7438
Mental Retardation	26	32	48.7	.08514	.7705
Emotional Disturbances	42	41	69.7	.95264	.3290
Speech	20	17	31.1	.68652	.4073
Hearing	16	11	22.7	1.50124	.2205
Preschool	27	19	38.7	3.34998	.0672
Public Law 94-142	22	21	36.1	.23378	.6287
Identification	32	29	51.3	1.05401	.3046
Diagnostic Methods	35	29	53.8	2.60606	.1065
Test Results	36	22	48.7	9.09086	.0026*
Teacher/Student	16	21	31.1	.13088	.7175
Mainstreaming	25	21	38.7	1.15776	.2819
Writing the IEP	20	16	30.3	1.04668	.3063
Evaluating Progress	27	24	42.9	.86082	.3535
Nondiscriminatory Eval.	15	17	26.9	.00000	1.0000
Instruc. Materials	27	29	47.1	.00293	.9568
Working with Parents	24	30	45.4	.11313	.7366
Outside Agencies	29	28	47.9	.37987	.5377
Program Trends	25	30	46.2	.01984	.8880
The Changing Law	29	41	58.8	1.64904	.1991
Evaluation of Programs	29	21	37.0	.46591	.4949

* Significant at the .05 level

Group I - Less than 10 years administrative experience (N=56)

Group II - More than 10 years administrative experience (N=63)

NOTE: Complete topic headings may be found by referring to Part III-B of the survey in Appendix A

Summary of Findings

The five hypotheses of this study were subjected to statistical analysis. A field grounded hypothesis, developed as a supplementary analysis of hypothesis five, was included. The results of the analyses are presented as follows:

Hypothesis one

Analysis of data to support hypothesis one revealed that there was no significant difference between two groups of elementary school administrators (those certified in administration before the passage of Public Law 94-142 in 1975 and those certified after 1975) relative to the number of college graduate courses taken, either as specific courses or as components of other courses, dealing with topics in special education. Hypothesis one was rejected. The results imply that the passage of Public Law 94-142 did not stimulate change in administrative certification requirements at the state level nor in graduate college program requirements for administrative certification.

Hypothesis Two

No significant difference was ascertained between the perceived confidence levels as related to various functions required in administering special education programs between those administrators in the state of Virginia who held positions as elementary school administrators for more than ten years versus those who held positions for less than ten years. Statistical analysis of the data

indicated that both groups perceived relative confidence in fulfilling the responsibilities required for administering special education programs in their schools. Hypothesis two was rejected.

Hypothesis Three

There was no significant difference between those elementary school administrators with ten or less years administrative experience and those with ten or more years experience in the reported use of resources for acquiring additional skills and knowledge relative to special education. An overall mean score of 2.5 indicated that administrators in general had not used resources to any significant degree for knowledge and skills development. Hypothesis three was rejected.

Hypothesis Four

There was no significant difference between the responses of those administrators who held administrative positions for less than ten years versus those who had held positions for more than ten years, in their attitudes toward the desirability of increased college requirements, state certification requirements, and school division inservice training in the area of special education. Hypothesis four was rejected. The findings of hypothesis four were revealing in that a mean score of 3.288 of a possible 4.00 score, supported the general agreement of all administrators who participated in the study that preparation efforts by college, state, and

local school divisions should be modified to assure more extensive training and preparation of administrators for dealing with special education responsibilities.

Hypothesis Five

There was indication of significance in several areas for hypothesis five. Frequencies and percentages used for analysis of the data indicated that a high percentage of elementary school administrators in the State of Virginia perceived a need for ongoing training in the form of workshops or inservices. Hypothesis five was accepted. Analysis of a field grounded hypothesis to determine any significant differences between administrators with ten or less years experience in administration and those with ten or more years experience, revealed that there was no significant difference. This analysis implies that both groups generally favor additional training. The field grounded hypothesis was rejected.

A summary of the problem and purposes of the study, conclusions, and recommendations for future research and educational practice will be presented in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER V

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter includes a summary of the study, conclusions based on the findings from analysis of the five hypotheses, and recommendations for future educational practices and research.

Summary

The two major objectives of this study were (1) to determine the extent to which elementary school administrators from fourteen public school divisions throughout the State of Virginia perceived themselves competent in performing various responsibilities required for administering special education programs in their schools, and their attitudes toward topics related to additional training and educational preparation for administrators.

An original survey developed for purposes of the study was pilot tested with several small groups of administrators. As a result of the pilot testing and suggestions from six persons considered to have expertise in the field special education, the survey was deemed adequately valid and reliable for purposes of the research.

The survey was sent by mail to one hundred seventy-three elementary school administrators chosen in random sampling of fourteen school divisions. The divisions represented seven geographical regions as listed in the Virginia Education Directory for the 1985-1986 school year.

The sampling included administrators from small, medium, and large city divisions and small, medium, and large county divisions to assure that representation would include adequate perspectives from administrators in all school division categories. The survey consisted of three parts to elicit data pertinent to educational preparation and training, confidence levels, and attitudes toward various topics related to use of resources, educational preparation, and future topics for inservice training.

The study was developed on the basis of five hypotheses which were designed to determine any significant differences in the preparation, confidence levels, and attitudes toward training between two groups of elementary school administrators. The two groups were designated as those administrators who were certified for and employed in administrative capacities before the passage of Public Law 94-142 in 1975, and those who were certified for and employed in administrative capacities after 1975.

Of the one hundred and seventy-three surveys mailed, one hundred nineteen, representing approximately sixty-nine percent, were returned. The data from the surveys were analyzed through use of the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.

Each of the five hypotheses was analyzed for significance of difference. The data to support the analyses were presented in tables indicating percentages, frequencies, means, and standard deviations. The chi square statistical analysis and the one way analysis of variance were used to determine significance. The .05

level of significance was used throughout the analysis. The results are discussed in the conclusions of the study.

Conclusions

Hypothesis One

Hypothesis one was rejected. It was hypothesized that elementary school administrators in the State of Virginia who received certification in administration after the passage of Public Law 94-142 in 1975 would have completed more graduate college courses, (either as specific courses or as components of other courses) related to special education than those elementary school administrators who were certified before 1975. There was no significant difference between the two groups. However, only thirty-seven percent of all respondents indicated that they had completed such courses.

While the results were not statistically significant, the implications are revealing. The analysis of data suggests that college requirements and state certification standards have not been changed since the passage of Public Law 94-142. State certification standards and college preparation programs for administrators have not specified special education related courses despite the fact that law has been in effect for more than ten years.

A review of the certification requirements for educational administration prescribed by the Virginia Board of Education in 1978, one year after state implementation of Public Law 94-142 in the public schools throughout the state, revealed that no mention of special

education was made. (Certification Regulations for Teachers, p.27)

The 1982 Certification Regulations for Teachers specified that the program of studies shall "provide knowledge of and competency in planning, developing, administering, and evaluating programs for exceptional individuals, including the gifted and talented and those with handicapping conditions." (p.60) In the endorsement requirements, seven specific courses were listed as follows: (1) school administration, (2) supervision of instruction, (3) school curriculum appropriate for the endorsement desired, (4) school law, (5) school community relations, (6) personnel administration, and (7) school finance. (p.61) The 1986 Certification Regulations for Teachers includes the exact specifications for program content as the 1982 regulations with the same seven courses. The only change is the addition of evaluation of instruction and instructional programs to the supervision area requirement. (p.27)

Although the research reviewed in Chapter two supported the contention that administrators do not choose to take college courses in specialized areas on their own initiative, this study suggests (even though the frequency is insignificant) that those administrators with ten or more years experience had taken as many graduate college courses related to special education as had their contemporaries with ten or less years experience, indicating that there was some degree of personal initiative involved in the development of special education knowledge.

There is room for a great deal of speculation as to why many elementary school administrators are not more actively engaged in educational improvement in the area of special education since the majority are required to deal with special education programs as a function of their administrative position.

The discussion of the history of the handicapped in Chapter One supports the contention of prejudicial attitudes that have prevailed throughout centuries. Although the handicapped have generally gained respect and support, the underlying attitudes of the general population appear to remain somewhat prejudicial in terms of acceptance of the bodily and mentally defective. It is reasonable to assume that administrators would not be exempt from this population.

Educators have traditionally been acclimated to the concept of educational equality and opportunity, but the strongest emphasis has been on education for children who are basically of "normal" intellectual functioning. It is suggested that many administrators remain skeptical of the benefit of special programs for the handicapped, especially for those who are severely and profoundly handicapped. Lortie (cited in Stainback and Stainback, 1984) perceived educators outside of special education as "either indifferent to, or even prejudiced against the needs of children considered handicapped." (p.104)

Dealing with a population whose needs are so diverse as those of exceptional children requires a broader understanding of human

development and a specialized focus on not only individual intellectual differences, but also physical and emotional differences. It is suggested that apprehensiveness and uncertainty in dealing with such a diverse population might contribute to a lack of interest in developing skills and increasing knowledge even though the importance of doing so is recognized by administrators. Since most administrators are formally evaluated on skills and competencies associated with general administration, special education competencies are not a priority in many instances.

Hypothesis Two

Hypothesis two was rejected. It was hypothesized that elementary school administrators in the State of Virginia who were certified in educational administration and employed in administrative capacities for less than ten years would report a higher level of perceived competencies relative to their responsibilities in administering special education programs than those administrators with more than ten years experience in administration.

There was no significant difference between the perceived confidence levels of the two groups of administrators. The statistical chi square analysis indicated that overall, administrators were relatively confident in their ability to perform the various functions required for administering special education programs. Respondents indicated higher levels of confidence with responsibilities dealing with compliance with division guidelines, maintenance

of records and reports, and other procedural topics. The areas of least confidence were those dealing with specialized responsibilities such as explaining assessment results, explaining the purpose of Public Law 94-142, and the development of individualized educational programs for handicapped students. Additional analysis of data as reported for hypotheses four and five suggested that the majority of administrators perceived a need for additional preparation and training which would strengthen confidence levels. This data implies that perhaps administrators were not quite as confident as their responses indicated.

Hypothesis Three

Hypothesis three was rejected. It was hypothesized that elementary school administrators in the State of Virginia with ten or less years of administrative experience would report use of more resources for professional development in special education than would those administrators with ten or more years of experience.

There was no significant difference between the two groups in the reported use of and benefit from available resources for professional improvement. The statistical one way analysis of variance was used to analyze the data.

Those resources most frequently used by all administrators were school division inservices, school division written guidelines, state guidelines and regulations, and college courses. Those less

frequently used were state and national conferences, video tapes/films, journals and research studies, and texts and reference materials. Of those resources used, a majority of respondents indicated that such resources had been somewhat to very beneficial as a means for improving skills and knowledge related to special education.

Hypothesis Four

Hypothesis four was rejected. It was hypothesized that those elementary school administrators with ten or less years of experience would report less need for additional educational preparation and increased state certification requirements in the area of special education than those administrators with ten or more years experience.

There was no significant difference between the attitudes of both groups toward the need for additional preparation and training. The statistical one way analysis of variance was used to analyze the data. Although there were no significant differences between the responses of the two groups, the findings were revealing. A relatively high percentage of all respondents indicated that future preparation efforts at both the state and college levels should be modified to include special education related courses in the requirements for administrative certification. A mean score of 3.288 of a possible score of 4.00 supports this conclusion. Ninety percent of the respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that additional graduate courses related to special education topics

would have been helpful for fulfilling their administrative responsibilities related to special education. Ninety-seven percent reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that graduate programs for administrative certification should include a course dealing with characteristics of exceptional children. Ninety-four percent indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that graduate programs for administrative certification should include a course dealing with diagnostic evaluations and test interpretation.

The percentages for support in modification of state certification requirements for administrators were of a lesser degree than those for increased college requirements. Eighty-six percent of all respondents indicated that state certification requirements should include coursework dealing with the characteristics of exceptional children and eighty-three percent reported agreement or strong agreement that state certification requirements include coursework dealing with diagnostic evaluations and test interpretation.

Hypothesis Five

Hypothesis five was accepted. It was hypothesized that elementary school administrators in the State of Virginia would report a need for continuous training in the area of special education.

Frequencies and percentages were analyzed. This procedure indicated that a significant number of elementary school administrators in the state perceived a need for continuous inservice training.

Although a significant number of respondents indicated a desire for continuous inservice training on various topics related to special education, it is of interest to speculate on the number of administrators who would actually avail themselves to the use of such training should it be offered. Since the results of hypothesis three indicated that seventy-nine percent of all respondents regarded inservice training to be beneficial (42.9 percent somewhat beneficial, 36.1 percent very beneficial) for acquiring additional knowledge and skills related to special education, it appears reasonable to suggest that if such training was provided by the state or individual school divisions that a significant number of administrators would participate.

Results of the field grounded hypothesis as a secondary investigation of hypothesis five indicated no significant difference between the two groups regarding the perceived desirability of inservices and workshops for additional training. This hypothesis was rejected. The results imply that a significant number of respondents in both groups realize the importance of expanding their knowledge to increase expertise in the area of special education.

In the chi square analysis of the field grounded hypothesis, one topic revealed a significant difference at the .05 level. The chi square result of .0026 for the topic "understanding test results" indicated that of the Group I administrators (N=55) with ten or less years experience, 36 reported the topic as a choice for future

training. Of the Group II administrators (N=63) with ten or more years of experience, 22 reported the topic as a choice. It is suggested that the difference in this instance might be attributable to the following: (1) those administrators with ten or more years experience have gained knowledge in understanding test results from their prior training and experience to a degree with which they feel relatively confident in fulfilling their responsibilities; (2) those administrators with ten or less years experience have not yet been exposed to the process of test interpretation by others nor have they had the necessary training to a degree that would allow them to develop such confidence, or (3) the amount of involvement with the responsibility for understanding test results might differ throughout the state resulting in a difference with regard to perceived need for additional training.

Frequency and percentage analyses for choices of topics for inservice education imply that overall, elementary school administrators perceive a need for additional training in several areas. Those topics most frequently noted correspond closely, in many instances, to the levels of confidence reported in Hypothesis Two. Respondents indicated a greater desire for topics related to (1) recognizing the characteristics of children with learning disabilities (78.2 percent), (2) recognizing the characteristics of children with emotional disturbances (69.7 percent), (3) the changing laws regarding special education (59 percent), (4) identification of handicapped children (51 percent), (5) recognizing

the characteristics of children with mental retardation (49 percent), and interpretation of test results (49 percent).

There were fewer choices for those topics which are not generally considered vital to the day to day responsibilities of administrators for dealing with special education placements and programs, or for those programs and services less frequently provided in the majority of schools. One exception for topics less frequently chosen, that of speech therapy, suggests that this service has been provided for a longer period of time in most schools and the placement decisions are usually based on results which normally require no specific understanding or interpretation on the part of the administrator.

Although respondents reported that they did not feel very confident with the topic of explaining the purposes of Public Law 94-142, it is interesting to note that this topic for future training was not a priority. This suggests that administrators are not often asked to explain the law nor deal with the specifics of the law in the daily administration of programs except as it relates to compliance standards which are covered by state and local guidelines.

Other areas of least confidence such as the teacher and student relationship in special education and evaluation of programs, were not cited as preference for future training. It is suggested that administrators feel that these areas of responsibility lie more in the realm of responsibility of other supervisory or administrative

roles and that assistance for dealing with such areas is readily available from central office special education personnel.

Recommendations for Educational Practice

As a result of the analysis of data and the conclusions based on interpretation of the data, the following recommendations for educational practice are made:

1. The Virginia Department of Education should consider modification of the certification requirements for public school administrators to include at least one course dealing with the characteristics of exceptional children.
2. The Virginia Department of Education should consider modification of requirements for the five year certificate renewal for administrators to include from one to three hours (of the six hours now specified for renewal) of credit in the area of special education related topics. Such credits could be obtained from non-college credit courses provided by local school divisions.
3. Institutions of higher learning should offer at least one general course dealing with topics of specific concern to school administrators such as identification procedures, understanding test results, programs for handicapped children, and the legal ramifications of the laws governing special education. While many courses in special education are offered by institutions of higher learning that provide education programs, these courses are usually more specific to individual topics and designed

primarily for teachers and/or supervisory personnel in special education rather than general education. The specificity of such courses as now offered would not usually be expected to entice general education administrators to select them for personal improvement or skills and knowledge or to fulfill certification requirements. A more general course designed for administrators would be more appropriate.

4. Local school divisions should conduct needs assessments to determine areas of greatest concern to administrators related to special education and plan and conduct workshops and inservices accordingly.

5. Administrators should be encouraged by school divisions to become more involved with use of available resources related to special education for development of skills and knowledge.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations for future research are made:

1. Researchers who desire to replicate this study using a similar survey instrument should consider the addition of a fourth choice category in Part II. An additional response choice to indicate that the respondent did not feel at all confident with a stated responsibility or that additional training would increase the confidence level for fulfilling a particular responsibility, would provide a wider range for statistical analysis and might

therefore reflect more accurately the perceived levels of confidence. It is suggested however, that if such an addition be made, careful attention should be given to wording to negate the possibility of implication of incompetence.

2. A study to investigate on a state wide basis the initiative taken by local school divisions for training of school administrators for special education would be of interest. Such a study might include needs assessment results and/or other methods used as a basis for determining topics for inservice training and descriptions of the actual training programs that were made available to administrators on either an elective or mandatory basis.

3. An investigation of a similar nature with high school administrators throughout the State of Virginia might provide an interesting comparison to the results of this study.

4. Studies to determine the perceptions of administrators by other populations would be of interest. Such populations might include teachers, colleagues, administrative superiors, state department of education staff, special education specialists, and/or others as applicable.

The Future of Special Education: Trends for Consideration

While some studies tend to support the idea that special education will take a new approach in the near future that will lessen the demands on educational personnel, others leave room for conjecture as to the changes that will affect all special education

programs and services.

A study of professionals in special education by Dobbs (1981) used the Delphi technique to gather data to support predictions for the future of special education. Among the future trends predicted were the following: (1) The creation of a general category in special education programs to be used for placement of all handicapped students presently eligible for mild to moderate category placements. The severely handicapped would continue to require and receive educational services in a more restrictive placement; (2) the restructuring of college preparation curricula for regular teacher education with mandatory courses dealing with special education, remedial reading techniques, and methods for individualizing instruction, and (3) the simplification of methods for student assessment as an answer to lessening the administrative time involved in planning, organizing, and implementing the assessment process for special education eligibility considerations.

In a discussion of possible trends for the future, Stainback and Stainback (1984) provided a rationale for the merger of special education with regular education programs into a unified system which would not distinguish between students as "special" or "regular". The rationale included the argument that the instructional needs of students did not require a dual system. The only consideration felt necessary was that of providing for the differences in intellectual, physical, and psychological characteristics for all children. (p.102) It was stressed that the merger of the two distinct emphases into one would eliminate the

labeling of children and that all students would be in positions to receive "a broader range of curriculum options with less wasted efforts." (p.103)

Regardless of the changes which might be possible for special education in the future, programs and services will continue to be provided in the public school systems to comply with the mandates of Public Law 94-142. Public school personnel must be prepared to fulfill their responsibilities.

John Gardner advocated in 1964 that "institutions as well as their individual members must carefully cultivate a capacity for self-renewal if they are to retain their vigor and purpose in an ever changing world." (Wilson, p.306) Certainly Gardner's statement is even more relevant in the 1980's. The concerted efforts of school divisions, colleges and universities, and the state departments of education to improve leadership training for administrators in the area of special education, offer exciting possibilities for the improvement of programs for all children educated in the public school setting. The challenge of special education remains a controversial issue but one that holds the promise of a brighter future for the special child. It is anticipated with confidence that public school personnel will intensify their efforts to assure quality educational opportunities for the handicapped children and youth of our country.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS - SPECIAL EDUCATION SURVEYDIRECTIONS

The survey is divided into three sections - PART I, PART II, and PART III. PART I contains items that ask for descriptive information. PART II addresses responsibilities encountered in administering special education programs, and PART III seeks your input regarding educational requirements for dealing with special education issues and understanding Public Law 94-142. Please read the directions appearing with each section. The survey may be completed by the school administrator who is most directly involved with special education programs.

PART I-a

- Please indicate the approximate number of students in your school division by checking the most appropriate space.
☐ Over 30,000 ☐ 20,000-30,000 ☐ 10,000-20,000 ☐ 5,000-10,000 ☐ 1,000-5,000
☐ Under 1,000
- Please indicate your position: ☐ Principal ☐ Assistant Principal
- Age Group: ☐ Over 55 ☐ 45-55 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 25-34 ☐ Under 25
- In what year did you complete your requirements for administrative certification? _____
- Highest degree earned: ☐ Ph.D/Ed.D ☐ C.A.S./Ed.S ☐ Masters ☐ Bachelors
- In what year did you complete requirements for the latest degree awarded? _____
- Did any of your degree programs have a concentration in special education? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Experience in administration: ☐ Over 20 years ☐ 16-20 years ☐ 11-15 years
☐ 6-10 years ☐ 1-5 years
- Please check the appropriate categories to indicate any special education programs currently located in your school. For each category checked, please indicate the approximate number of students.

<input type="checkbox"/> Learning Disabled (self-contained) (approx. number _____)	<input type="checkbox"/> Learning Disabled (resource) (approx. number _____)
<input type="checkbox"/> Emotionally Disturbed (self-contained) (approx. number _____)	<input type="checkbox"/> Educable Mentally Retarded (approx. number _____)
<input type="checkbox"/> Emotionally Disturbed (itinerant model) (approx. number _____)	<input type="checkbox"/> Preschool Handicapped (approx. number _____)
<input type="checkbox"/> Cross-Categorical (self-contained) (approx. number _____)	<input type="checkbox"/> Cross-Categorical (resource) (approx. number _____)
<input type="checkbox"/> Hearing Impaired (approx. number _____)	<input type="checkbox"/> Visually Impaired (approx. number _____)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ (approx. number _____)	
- Please indicate by checking, any special education related services that are currently provided for students in your school.
☐ Speech therapy ☐ Occupational Therapy ☐ Physical Therapy ☐ Counseling
☐ Other _____
- In my school division, eligibility decisions are made by:
☐ a multidisciplinary team in my school ☐ a central office team ☐ both

COMMENTS:

PART I-b

1. Prior to your involvement with special education as an elementary school administrator, did you have experience teaching/other in the field of special education?

Yes No

If Yes, please indicate in what capacity: _____

2. Did your undergraduate program include courses dealing with special education or exceptional children? Yes No

If Yes, please check any topics that are similar to those you completed either as a specific course or as components of other courses.

	Specific Course	Covered in Another Course
Abnormal Behavior	_____	_____
Behavior Management for Exceptional Children	_____	_____
Characteristics of the Mentally Retarded	_____	_____
Child Development	_____	_____
Children with Learning Disabilities	_____	_____
Communication Disorders	_____	_____
Diagnostic Testing Procedures	_____	_____
Emotionally Disturbed Children	_____	_____
Evaluation Techniques	_____	_____
Exceptional Children	_____	_____
Programs and Services for Exceptional Children	_____	_____
Trends and Issues in Special Education	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____

3. Did your graduate program(s) include courses dealing with special education or exceptional children? Yes No

If Yes, please check any topics that are similar to those you completed either as a specific course or as components of other courses.

	Specific Course	Covered in Another Course
Abnormal Behavior	_____	_____
Behavior Management for Exceptional Children	_____	_____
Characteristics of the Mentally Retarded	_____	_____
Child Development	_____	_____
Children with Learning Disabilities	_____	_____
Communication Disorders	_____	_____
Diagnostic Testing Procedures	_____	_____
Emotionally Disturbed Children	_____	_____
Evaluation Techniques	_____	_____
Exceptional Children	_____	_____
Programs and Services for Exceptional Children	_____	_____
Trends and Issues in Special Education	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____

4. Please list any such education courses you have taken related to special education and/or exceptional children that were not part of any degree program but selected personally to improve your knowledge or skills. _____

5. Please use the scale below to indicate the level of benefit that you have derived from use of the resources listed in acquiring knowledge and skills for administering special education programs. Please check the most appropriate space for each.

- A. Very beneficial
B. Somewhat beneficial
C. Not at all beneficial
D. I have not made use of this resource

	A	B	C	D
- College courses	_____	_____	_____	_____
- School division workshops or inservice programs	_____	_____	_____	_____
- State conferences	_____	_____	_____	_____
- National conferences	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Written guidelines prepared by school division	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Virginia State Regulations for Special Education	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Video tapes, films	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Journal articles, research reports	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Text and reference books	_____	_____	_____	_____
- Other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

PART II

This section of the survey consists of statements that address issues associated with administering special education programs. Please read each statement and check only the one box that best describes your personal feelings regarding the extent to which you feel confident in dealing with each particular issue. The choices are described as follows:

- A. I feel very confident with this issue on the basis of my experience and training.
- B. I feel moderately confident with this issue on the basis of my experience and training.
- C. I feel somewhat confident with this issue on the basis of my experience and training.
- D. I am not required to deal with this issue in my administrative position.

	A	B	C	D
1. Explain purposes of FL 94-142 when asked to do so				
2. Recognize student characteristics and/or behaviors that might warrant comprehensive assessment				
3. Explain to parents and staff the conditions that warrant referral of a student for a comprehensive assessment				
4. Understand roles and responsibilities of each member of the multidisciplinary team responsible for comprehensive assessments				
5. Maintain compliance with established timelines for completion of comprehensive assessments				
6. Participate in decision-making for most appropriate placements based on evaluation of the comprehensive assessment data				
7. Explain comprehensive assessment results to parents and others when asked to do so				
8. Actively participate in the development of IEP's				
9. Actively participate in the IEP conference with parents and other appropriate personnel				
10. Explain procedures for placement in special education programs				
11. Explain "least restrictive environment"				
12. Explain "due process rights" to parents				
13. Explain purpose of the individualized education program				
14. Explain rationale for the multidisciplinary team evaluation model				
15. Offer parents and teachers suggestions and/or alternative solutions to student problems when a special education placement is not substantiated				
16. Maintain special education programs in compliance with school division guidelines				
17. Understand roles and responsibilities of personnel providing support services (i.e., occupational therapist, school psychologist, etc.)				
18. Recognize congruence of teaching style and unique learning needs of a special education student				
19. Assess student progress in special education programs				
20. Contribute to decisions regarding mainstreaming of special education students				
21. Actively participate in decisions regarding modification of IEP's				
22. Maintain special education records and reports in compliance with school division requirements				
23. Maintain records to assure completion of triennial evaluations for students currently eligible for special education programs				
24. Follow correct procedure for placement of a new student with an				

PART III

The following section consists of statements relative to educational preparation and/or training for elementary school administrators. Please read each statement and, using your best judgment, decide for each whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. After each statement, please check only the one box that best represents your personal opinion.

- A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree

	A	B	C	D
A. 1. It would have been helpful in my role as a school administrator if additional courses related to special education had been included in my graduate program(s) for educational administration.				
2. College graduate programs for educational administration should include at least one course dealing with the characteristics of exceptional children.				
3. College graduate programs for educational administration should include at least one course dealing with diagnostic evaluation and test interpretation.				
4. State certification requirements for school administrators should include at least one course dealing with the characteristics and needs of exceptional children.				
5. State certification requirements for school administrators should include at least one course dealing with diagnostic evaluation and test interpretation.				
6. It would be helpful if the State Department of Education could offer periodic conferences and/or workshops for elementary school administrators, to update information regarding implementation of special education programs.				
7. It would be helpful if my school division would provide, on a yearly basis, various workshops related to special education programs.				
8. I often read research studies in the field of special education to assist me in my administrative responsibilities related to special education matters.				
9. The written guidelines provided by my school division have assisted me in my administrative responsibilities related to special education matters.				
10. Inservice programs and/or workshops provided by my school division have assisted me in my administrative responsibilities related to special education matters.				

- B. Please check the topics below that would be most helpful to you in your role as an elementary school administrator working with special education programs, if workshops or inservice programs were offered by the state and/or your school division.

- Characteristics of Exceptional Children:
 - Learning Disabilities _____
 - Mental Retardation _____
 - Emotional Disturbances _____
 - Speech Impairments _____
 - Hearing Impairments _____
 - Preschool Handicaps _____
 - Other _____
- Public Law 94-142: Rationale _____
- Identification of Handicapped Children _____
- Diagnostic Methods of Evaluation _____
- Understanding Test Results _____
- The Special Education Teacher and the Handicapped Student: Roles and Relationships _____
- Mainstreaming the Handicapped Child _____
- Writing the Individualized Educational Program (IEP) _____
- Evaluating the Progress of Special Education Students _____
- Nondiscriminatory Methods of Evaluation and Reporting _____
- Selecting Instructional Materials for the Special Education Classroom _____
- Working With Parents of Special Education Students _____
- Outside Agencies: Services Available to/or Students _____
- Current Program Trends in Special Education _____
- The Changing Law: Recent Litigation and Possible Impact on Special Education Programs/Administration _____
- Evaluation of Special Education Programs _____
- Other _____

Thank you for your assistance in completing this survey.

APPENDIX B
COVER LETTER

Nancy E. Hyatt

636 Rosaer Lane, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23464

May 14, 1986

Dear Colleague:

I realize that you are too often asked to participate in educational research. I share your concern that the completion of surveys and questionnaires is a time-consuming task and realize especially that this time of year is extremely busy in preparation for the closing of school.

Although I am truly empathetic to the demands on your time, I am asking your assistance in completing yet another survey that is vital to my research study as a doctoral candidate at the College of William and Mary.

My research concerns the role of the elementary school administrator in the public school setting who is responsible for administering special education programs. I will be gratefully appreciative if you would allow approximately fifteen minutes to the completion of the enclosed survey. I ask only that you be as honest and candid in your answers as possible.

I assure you that there are no identifying marks on any survey and that your anonymity will be preserved. Neither you nor your school division will be identified. Twelve school divisions throughout the state will participate in this study. My purpose is to use the survey results for recommending education requirements for future administrators and to assess the possible value of inservice training or workshops for present administrators. If you are interested in the results of the study, please indicate at the conclusion of the survey and I shall be happy to forward a copy to you upon completion of my research.

Thank you for your willingness to assist me in this study. Your efforts are sincerely appreciated. I would appreciate return of the completed survey by June 1 if at all possible.

Sincerely yours,

Nancy E. Hyatt

Nancy E. Hyatt

/s

APPENDIX C

CONFIDENCE LEVELS REPORTED BY ALL RESPONDENTS

APPENDIX C

CONFIDENCE LEVELS REPORTED BY ALL RESPONDENTS
SURVEY PART II

Item Number	Frequencies and Percentages of Responses			
	Very Conf.	Mod. Conf.	Somewhat Conf.	Not Req.
1	23 (19.3%)	67 (56.3%)	24 (20.2%)	4 (3.4%)
2	34 (28.6%)	70 (58.8%)	14 (11.8%)	1 (.8%)
3	41 (34.5%)	62 (52.1%)	16 (13.4%)	0 (0%)
4	58 (48.7%)	45 (37.8%)	16 (13.4%)	0 (0%)
5	50 (42.5%)	44 (37.0%)	22 (18.5%)	3 (2.5%)
6	52 (43.7%)	47 (39.5%)	20 (16.8%)	0 (0%)
7	22 (18.5%)	68 (57.1%)	28 (23.5%)	1 (.8%)
8	24 (20.2%)	49 (41.2%)	42 (35.3%)	4 (3.4%)
9	39 (32.8%)	49 (41.2%)	28 (23.5%)	3 (2.5%)
10	49 (41.2%)	49 (41.2%)	21 (17.6%)	0 (0%)
11	55 (46.2%)	44 (37.0%)	19 (16.0%)	1 (.8%)
12	51 (42.9%)	39 (32.8%)	28 (23.5%)	1 (.8%)
13	57 (47.9%)	45 (37.8%)	16 (13.4%)	1 (.8%)
14	50 (42.0%)	47 (39.5%)	21 (17.6%)	1 (.8%)
15	26 (21.8%)	58 (48.7%)	35 (29.4%)	0 (0%)
16	50 (42.0%)	35 (46.2%)	14 (11.8%)	0 (0%)
17	51 (42.9%)	51 (42.9%)	17 (14.3%)	0 (0%)
18	25 (21.0%)	65 (54.6%)	29 (24.4%)	0 (0%)
19	17 (14.3%)	53 (44.5%)	42 (35.3%)	7 (5.9%)
20	36 (30.3%)	59 (49.16%)	20 (16.8%)	4 (3.4%)
21	31 (26.1%)	57 (47.9%)	30 (25.2%)	1 (.8%)
22	52 (43.7%)	51 (42.9%)	14 (11.8%)	2 (1.7%)
23	45 (37.8%)	46 (38.7%)	19 (16.0%)	9 (7.6%)
24	44 (37.0%)	50 (42.0%)	20 (16.8%)	5 (4.2%)

NOTE: For complete item number descriptions, see Appendix A - Survey, Part II

APPENDIX D

USE OF AND BENEFIT FROM USE OF RESOURCES

APPENDIX D

USE OF AND BENEFIT FROM USE OF RESOURCES FOR ALL RESPONDENTS
 FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGES OF VALUE CHOICES

Value/Mean	Frequency of Response	Percentage of Response
1.22	2	1.7
1.33	2	1.7
1.44	3	2.5
1.50	1	.8
1.56	3	2.5
1.67	1	.8
1.75	2	1.7
1.78	7	5.9
1.89	3	2.5
2.00	3	2.5
2.11	12	10.1
2.22	2	1.7
2.25	1	.8
2.33	9	7.6
2.38	1	.8
2.44	7	5.9
2.50	2	1.7
2.56	8	6.7
2.67	7	5.9
2.75	3	2.5
2.78	4	3.4
2.89	9	7.6
3.00	1	.8
3.11	1	.8
3.13	2	1.7
3.22	1	.8
3.25	3	2.5
3.33	2	1.7

Maximum Value = 4.00

APPENDIX E

REPORTED USE OF RESOURCES - ALL RESPONDENTS

APPENDIX E

REPORTED USE AND BENEFIT OF RESOURCES

FREQUENCIES, PERCENTAGES, MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS

Resource	Choices * See Key Below				Missing	Mean	S. D.
	A	B	C	D			
College Courses	14 (11.8%)	39 (32.8%)	12 (10.1%)	38 (31.9%)	16 (13.4%)	2.282	1.106
School Division Inservices	43 (36.1%)	51 (42.9%)	11 (9.2%)	9 (7.6%)	5 (4.2%)	3.123	.884
State Conferences	9 (7.5%)	21 (17.6%)	11 (9.2%)	67 (56.3%)	11 (9.2%)	1.741	1.045
National Conferences	5 (4.2%)	9 (7.6%)	10 (8.4%)	78 (65.5%)	17 (14.3%)	1.422	.849
Written Guidelines (Division)	37 (31.1%)	53 (44.5%)	13 (10.9%)	7 (5.9%)	9 (7.6%)	3.091	.841
State Regulations	26 (21.8%)	49 (41.2%)	16 (13.4%)	17 (14.3%)	11 (9.2%)	2.778	.989
Video Tapes/Films	7 (5.9%)	35 (29.4%)	13 (10.9%)	49 (41.2%)	15 (12.6%)	2.000	1.043
Journals/Research	19 (16.0%)	63 (52.9%)	5 (4.2%)	20 (16.8%)	12 (10.1%)	2.757	.960
Tests/Reference	16 (13.4%)	56 (47.1%)	11 (9.2%)	20 (16.8%)	16 (13.4%)	2.660	.966

* Choice A - Very Beneficial
 Choice B - Somewhat Beneficial
 Choice C - Not at all Beneficial
 Choice D - I have not made use of this resource

APPENDIX F

REPORTED ATTITUDES TOWARD EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION AND TRAINING

APPENDIX F

REPORTED ATTITUDES TOWARD EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION AND TRAINING
ALL RESPONDENTS
SURVEY PART III

Value (Mean) of Response	Frequency of Response	Percentage of Response
2.40	1	.8
2.50	3	2.5
2.60	4	3.4
2.70	5	4.2
2.80	7	5.9
2.90	8	6.7
3.00	11	9.2
3.10	6	5.0
3.20	4	3.4
3.25	1	.8
3.30	14	11.8
3.40	9	7.6
3.50	10	8.4
3.60	10	8.4
3.67	1	.8
3.70	9	7.6
3.75	1	.8
3.80	4	3.4
3.89	1	.8
3.90	6	5.0
4.00	4	3.4

Maximum Value = 4.000

Mean = 3.288

S.D. = .406

APPENDIX G

REPORTED ATTITUDES TOWARD EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION AND TRAINING

APPENDIX G
REPORTED ATTITUDES TOWARD EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION AND TRAINING
FREQUENCIES, PERCENTAGES, MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS

Item Number Survey Part III	Choices *See Key Below				Missing	Mean	S.D.
	A	B	C	D			
	Frequencies and Percentages						
1	57 (47.9%)	51 (42.9%)	8 (6.7%)	1 (.8%)	2	3.402	.657
2	72 (60.5%)	43 (36.1%)	3 (2.5%)	0 (0%)	1	3.585	.544
3	63 (52.9%)	49 (41.2%)	6 (5.0%)	0 (0%)	1	3.483	.595
4	50 (42.0%)	52 (43.7%)	15(12.6%)	0 (0%)	2	3.299	.686
5	45 (37.8%)	55 (46.2%)	16(13.4%)	2 (1.7%)	1	3.262	.738
6	57 (47.9%)	52 (43.7%)	8 (6.7%)	1 (.8%)	1	3.398	.656
7	56 (47.1%)	52 (43.7%)	10 (8.4%)	1 (.8%)	0	3.370	.675
8	21 (17.6%)	60 (50.4%)	38(31.9%)	0 (0%)	0	2.857	.692
9	41 (34.5%)	64 (53.8%)	12(10.1%)	1 (.8%)	1	3.229	.659
10	35 (29.4%)	61 (51.3%)	11(9.2%)	11 (9.2%)	1	3.017	.877

* Choice A = Strongly Agree
Choice B = Agree
Choice C = Disagree
Choice D = Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX H

PERCEIVED NEED FOR CONTINUOUS TRAINING: WORKSHOPS/INSERVICE CHOICES

APPENDIX H

PERCEIVED NEED FOR CONTINUOUS TRAINING: WORKSHOP/INSERVICE CHOICES
 FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES REPORTED FOR ALL RESPONDENTS

Topic	Frequency of Response	Percentage of Response
Characteristics of Exceptional Children:		
- Learning Disabilities	93	78.2
- Mental Retardation	58	48.7
-Emotional Disturbances	83	69.7
-Speech Impairments	37	31.1
-Hearing Impairments	27	22.7
-Preschool Handicaps	46	38.7
Public Law 94-142	43	36.1
Identification of Handicapped Children	61	51.3
Diagnostic Methods of Evaluation	64	53.8
Understanding Test Results	58	48.7
Special Education Teacher and Students	37	31.1
Mainstreaming Handicapped Children	46	38.7
Writing the IEP	36	30.3
Evaluating Progress of Students	51	42.9
Nondiscriminatory Evaluation	32	26.9
Selecting Instructional Materials	56	47.1
Working with Parents	54	45.4
Outside Agencies: Available Services	57	47.9
Current Program Trends	55	46.2
The Changing Law: Litigation and Impact	70	58.8
Evaluation of Programs	44	37.0

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ABSTRACT

PERCEIVED COMPETENCIES AND ATTITUDES OF A SELECT GROUP OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS RELATIVE TO PREPARATION AND EXPERIENCE IN ADMINISTERING SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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The purpose of this study was to determine the perceived competencies involved in administering special education programs and the attitudes toward educational preparation and training of a select group of elementary school administrators. Principals from fourteen public school divisions throughout the State of Virginia, during the 1985-86 school year, participated in the study.

An original survey developed for purposes of the study was mailed to 173 elementary school administrators chosen in a random sampling from seven geographical divisions throughout the state. Sixty-nine percent of the administrators responded to the survey.

Responses from the three part survey were analyzed through use of the IBM Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The data were used to investigate five hypotheses designed to determine any significant differences between two specific groups of administrators applicable to educational preparation, the extent to which perceived competencies in fulfilling responsibilities in administering special education programs differed, and attitudes toward various topics related to additional preparation and training. The two groups were identified as (1) those administrators who were certified for and employed as administrators before the passage of Public Law 94-142 (The Education For All Handicapped Children Act), and (2) those administrators certified for and employed after passage of the law in 1975.

There were no significant differences between the two groups with regards to educational preparation nor their perceived competencies. All hypotheses were rejected with the exception of one which showed that all administrators participating in the study perceived a need for additional preparation and training efforts. The overall results suggest that although the administrators were relatively confident in their abilities to administer special education programs, they supported measures to intensify efforts for educational preparation and training.

Speculation pertinent to the findings is presented in the study. Recommendations are made for preparation and training efforts to improve skills and knowledge which will assist administrators in their endeavors to provide programs and services to handicapped children and youth who are educated in the public school systems.